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THE

2701
REFUGEE IN AMERICA:

A NOVEL.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF "THE DOMESTIC MANNERS OF THE AMERICANS."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

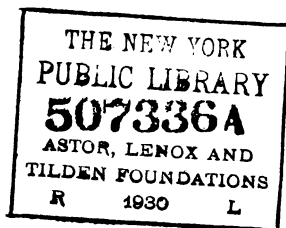
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THE
REFUGEE IN AMERICA.

CHAPTER XVI.

Love conquered fear.—SCOTT.

MORE than a week passed, during which no single circumstance occurred to reward the zealous activity with which, from different motives, both the cousins sought to investigate the business which brought them to Carbury. The woman who had expressed a doubt, as to the truth of the young man's having been thrown into the sea, had been questioned repeatedly on the subject, and it was evident from her answers, that her opinion rested on

nothing but a general persuasion, that whatever Mother Dally said, was probably false.

The statement was not only universally received as true by the whole parish, but when Lady Darcy suggested to a decent farmer's wife with whom she was conversing on the subject, that it appeared to her improbable, she replied, "It may seem so to you, ma'am, but to us who know the wild ways of these people, it appears much more likely, than that they should pay any thing to give him Christian burial."

At length a circumstance occurred, which though trifling in itself, was sufficient to alarm the wary lawyer, and to induce him vehemently to urge their immediately leaving a place, where, as he said, their continuance could only produce prolonged and useless vexation.

One morning, after having passed the hour of breakfast in a repetition of all the soothing nothings with which he then sought to prolong the period of an intercourse which daily became more agreeable to him, he left the hotel to repeat his examination of a person, from whom

Lady Darcy thought something more might be elicited.

A few steps from the inn door he met, and joined Mr. Wilmot; they walked together towards the cliff, and having reached the edge of it, Mr. Wilmot pointed out to his companion a young woman, carrying baskets on one arm and a baby on the other; she was seated on a fragment of wood, close to the spot where Dally had fallen. It was the same Lady Darcy had seen on her return from her visit to Mrs. Gardiner.

"That girl," said Mr. Wilmot, "is a poor creature seduced by the young villain, whose death, if it had happened in any other way, would really have been a blessing. She was the prettiest and the best girl in the parish till she unhappily got acquainted with Dally. Her baby was not born more than a month before the accident, and the poor girl will not bring it to the parish, though she must be hard driven by want. She keeps herself by making and selling baskets; and before her misfortune the

trade was not a bad one, for she made nothing of a walk to Lyme, where she easily disposed of them; but it must be too far for her now, broken-hearted as she is, and a child to carry into the bargain."

The Sergeant listened eagerly to this story; it struck him that it might furnish the means of convincing Lady Darcy of the futility of her hope. He reasoned, and with great justice, that if Dally were alive, the girl he loved could not be ignorant of his existence; and the mournful listless manner in which she sat gazing on the place where he fell, as well as the assurance of Mr. Wilmot, convinced him that she considered her lover as dead. He determined, however, to question her; and taking leave of the clergyman, who had a visit to make at some distance, he descended by the steep path already mentioned, and was presently beside the poor girl. He addressed her in a kind and gentle voice, and asked her why she sat there, while the wind blew so coldly from the sea. The poor young creature soon told

her mournful history; and when she had ended it, rose up, and said she had talked too long, for she was going to try if she could not get to Lyme by the beach, which was a much shorter way than the road.

"I must get there somehow," she added, "for my baskets are worth nothing here, and there I am sure to sell them; but it's a weary long way to carry a baby, and I'm not over strong."

"Stay for a moment, my poor girl," said Mr. Oglander, "you shall not have need to tax your strength so to-day; here, this will do instead of selling baskets for a day or two."

The languid eye sparkled with surprise and joy as she received the munificent five shillings of the lawyer; she made a low reverence, but appeared too much awed by his magnificence to speak again, and prepared herself to leave the fatal spot, which, though she never looked at it without a shudder, seemed to have some power of fascination for her faltering steps; for again and again had she found herself seated on that

fragment of a wreck, without being conscious of the motive that brought her there.

"And it was here," resumed the Sergeant, laying his hand upon her shoulder, "it was here that the father of that poor babe was murdered?"

The tears began to flow afresh down the pale cheek of the young mother, and she bent her head in assent.

"And how are you sure he was killed? Did you see him afterwards?"

"Ah, no! I wish I had! But I never saw nothing of him after he left me, singing as gay as a lark in the morning, till I saw his dear blood here."

"How soon did you come to the spot?"

"I come down that very evening, before 'twas dark, and here I saw it, here, and here, and here;" and as she spoke, she stepped forward towards the sea. "I traced the red blood from there, where they say he fell, to the very edge of the sea, where he was put into his uncle's boat, and carried out to the sea to be buried."

The young creature sobbed violently, and turned her agitated face from the inquirer.

"You traced his blood, my girl, from that place to the sea?"

"Yes, sir, and further too, for the tide was out then. His blood must have run like water to soak into the sand that fashion; oh, my poor baby, it was your blood that run then!"

The Sergeant was silent for a moment, and then said, "Go home, my girl, and try to forget the father, while doing your best for his boy."

The girl shook her head, and turning from him, took her way up the cliff.

Nixon Oglander remained a few moments standing exactly where she had left him; then turning round, he looked in all directions, as if to assure himself that he was alone.

"The lovely countess is right, upon my soul! the blood of a dead man does not flow forth like water."

He paced the beach for half an hour, revolving all the probabilities of the case. "He lives," he exclaimed, "but does not show him-

self even to this girl; he hides himself, to be revenged on Edward, and to get money from the family. Let him live; but it shall be for me, or I will finish my kinsman's work."

* * * * *

The pleasure Sergeant Oglander felt in the society of his cousin was in no degree mutual. She was still far, very far from guessing his real character, but she suspected the nature of his feelings towards herself; and nothing but the dread of losing her last hope could have induced her to continue with him an hour.

Many circumstances combined to make her doubt the propriety of relying solely upon him; the chief of these was the belief that his mind was not sufficiently devoted to the business she had entrusted to him. She began to feel that it would be equally useless and painful to prolong her stay, but determined, before she quitted Carbury, herself to converse with the mother and uncle of Richard Dally, and that without the presence of her cousin. For this purpose, she was aware that an agent and confidant

would be necessary; and she soon decided that the widow Gardiner would be the fittest person for the office.

In consequence of this decision, she pursued her way to the house of the poor poultry-woman. The interest she had repeatedly manifested in her narrative ensured her welcome there. She accepted the invitation to sit down; and after a few moments Lady Darcy astonished and almost terrified her humble hostess, by communicating her name and rank.

The eager interest which the good and grateful woman took in the business now explained to her, convinced Lady Darcy that she could no where have found a person more fitted for her purpose. She promised faithfully to keep the secret confided to her, and declared she would rather be the humble means of helping to save her benefactor from the misfortunes that threatened him, than be made queen of all the world. It appeared by her statement, that she was not in habits of familiar acquaintance with any of the Dally family, or their

associates, but she proposed to contrive some means of opening an intercourse with them. She told Lady Darcy that their manner of life had greatly changed since the accident; that the mother remained for weeks together without going into the village, not even to visit the ale-house, which had before been her daily haunt. The dog they kept, she said, was too savage for her to venture upon going to the hut, but she thought she could contrive to meet West when he was coming up to his sister's, and might begin a conversation by asking the price of his fish; he generally went out every day in his little boat, and often remained out all night; it was greatly supposed, she added, that fishing was not his only trade. After some farther conversation, it was agreed that Mrs. Gardiner should watch for this man, and induce him to come to the hotel, by telling him that there was a sick lady who had been inquiring for fresh fish; she expected to see him about six o'clock, but it might be earlier. Lady Darcy returned to the inn as soon as this

arrangement had been made, and had just finished a letter to her father, when she was told that Mrs. Gardiner desired to speak to her; she ordered her to be shown in, and found her out of breath with the haste she had made to tell her that West had passed her door almost immediately after her departure, carrying a bundle of nets upon his shoulders, which he was spreading out to dry upon the cliff. Lady Darcy instantly determined to go thither, and endeavour to enter into conversation with him.

Mrs. Gardiner directed her to the spot, and then left her. Lady Darcy made a strong effort to subdue her agitation; she was about to see the man who could best inform her of all she most hoped, or most feared to know; she trembled lest she might fail to meet him, yet trembled more at the thought of addressing him. A few moments brought her to the spot described; and she saw a tall, ill-looking fellow, in the ordinary dress of a fisherman, busily occupied in repairing nets spread out upon the

grass. She felt that she must not pause, or the firmness she had struggled to obtain might leave her; she walked round to the point where he was occupied, and stopped for a moment, as if watching his work; then raising her eyes to his face, she said abruptly,

“Are you not the uncle of the poor boy who was killed here about a month ago?”

The man looked up at her for a moment without speaking, then resuming his employment, he answered in no very gentle accents, “Yes.”

It required some strong motive to induce any one to ask William West a second question. His person was almost gigantic; his head, which was covered with a mat of shaggy black hair, was unusually large, and of that unseemly shape which we all (however uninitiated in the science of phrenology) instinctively feel is indicative of animal, rather than intellectual faculties; his eyes large and widely open, had a stare of effrontery and insolence inexpressibly disgusting; his enormous face was almost

covered with hair, and his voice, even in uttering that single word, sounded appalling, from its deep and hollow harshness.

Such was the being with whom the unfortunate Lady Darcy now most earnestly desired to converse. She gave one glance at the nearest group of cottages, and was comforted by seeing Mrs. Gardiner leaning over a gate conversing with another female; she felt certain that the good woman would not lose sight of her; and thus encouraged, she again addressed him.

“It was a sad event, and ought to be atoned for to his family.”

His frightful eyes were again raised to her face as he replied,

“It shall be atoned for.”

“I am a relation of him who did the deed,” said Lady Darcy firmly, “and I am here on purpose to inquire into the circumstances connected with it, and to make such reparation as may lie in our power.”

The man now dropped the net he was hold-

ing, and folding his arms, stood upright before her, with a look of frightful malignity.

“ The atonement we want is the blood of the murderer ; and it shall go hard with us but we will have it yet.”

Lady Darcy became deadly pale, and fearing she had over-rated her strength, turned to leave him ; but West laid his huge hand on her arm :

“ Are you the villain's sister ?”

“ No ; I am Lord Darcy's mother.”

“ Then 'tis like you may think it worth your while to buy his life ?”

“ His life is beyond your reach,” said Lady Darcy, recovering her firmness. “ What I would offer is not a bribe, but an atonement.”

“ You may be a trifle mistaken as to that, my mistress ; we know where the bloody villain is, as well as you do, and it may be better. But give us a price,—and perhaps we will be civil.”

Lady Darcy looked at him, and his bold eye fell before her gentle but earnest gaze ; he affected to return to his work.

"Tis your business to say what you will give to stop the course of justice; for my share I care little about it; but that there poor wench as you may see down yonder, is the mother of a baby by him, and she ought to be provided for, as he would have done handsomely if he had lived; and there's his mother turned out of house and home by his death, she ought to be kept to her dying day."

"And she shall be kept," replied Lady Darcy, her usual calmness of voice and manner perfectly restored; "they shall both be provided for," she continued, as she followed with her eye the direction of his finger, and recognised in the figure he pointed out the poor basket-girl she had before seen; "they both shall be provided for, as well as the child, if—" William West looked up as she spoke—"if," she added, "we find reason to believe your nephew is really dead."

An expression of brutal rage rested upon the countenance of the man as he returned her gaze. Lady Darcy quailed not, but endea-

voured to read his soul in his face. She saw that fierce and deadly passion was working within him; but was it vengeance for injury, or rage at the discovery of imposture that moved him thus? She had expected by so abruptly stating a doubt of the fact, to produce an emotion which might confirm or destroy her hopes; but in this she entirely failed. The man did not appear frightened, but angry; and so he might surely have done, had a fact which so deeply affected his family, been treated as a forgery. When he spoke, it was still less possible to trace the feeling she sought for.

“ If you expect that your murdering villain of a son shall escape hanging, by your saying that the man he killed is not dead,—why, try your best, and see what comes of it.”

So saying he suddenly gathered up his nets, and without waiting farther parley, retreated towards the path which led to his sister's hovel.

Lady Darcy slowly and sadly returned to the cottage of Mrs. Gardiner. The poor woman met her on the road, and saw at once that she

had derived no satisfaction from the interview. But when she had listened to the narrative of what had passed, which Lady Darcy gave minutely, as if wishing to recall it perfectly to her own memory, she proved no contemptible comforter.

“What we want, my lady, is surely to prove the dear young lord as innocent in hand as he is in heart; but if we can't do this, there is no need to terrify ourselves with the wild threats of that lawless ruffian West. Your ladyship must know that he has got no power in any way to follow my lord to foreign parts; 'tis nothing but bluster to get your ladyship's gold.”

The good sense of her humble friend was not thrown away; and with increased courage Lady Darcy desired Mrs. Gardiner to tell her what she knew of the basket-girl.

“'Tis a dismal story, my lady, as ever tongue told. Susan Norris was as good a girl as any in the village, till her grandfather died, less than two years ago, and she was left father-

less and motherless, with no hope but in her own hands, or the parish workhouse. Unluckily for her, the landlady of the Anchor, where all the sailors go, got hold of her, and offered her good wages, for such a slip of a girl, if she would be bar-maid—”

“ And there she met this Dally?” interrupted Lady Darcy.

“ Just so, my lady, but nobody I believe suspected that they were over-intimate till just before the poor creature lay in. The boy was fond enough of her, and insisted that his mother should nurse her, and so she did, and kept her and the babe in her house, till Dick——till Dick was removed, my lady; and she was as meek as a lamb to the crusty drunken old woman, and made money too with her baskets; yet the moment the lad was gone, both mother and child were turned into the street.”

“ And how does she live now?” inquired Lady Darcy.

“ Why, she has a little room in the village, and pays the rent of that with what she earns;

but if the neighbours did not give her a morsel now and then, I believe she would hardly have enough to keep her alive."

"I should like to speak to her," said Lady Darcy. "Do you think I should run any risk of meeting West again, if I walked down to the place where she is sitting?"

"It's likely not, my lady; but your ladyship looks very pale, and if I might advise, you should put off speaking to Susan till to-morrow; you will never miss her about this time, if you go down to the beach; she always rests on that log there for a while, in her way to Lyme with her baskets. I believe the only pleasure she has got is just sitting with her baby on that bit of a mast; and it is a strange pleasure too, considering."

"And that dreadful man, is it likely I should meet him to-morrow?"

"Oh, my lady, for him, there's no danger of his being in the way. 'Tis rare to see him so early in the day as this. He don't much love daylight on shore, I fancy."

Lady Darcy now took her leave, and returned to the hotel, weary, feverish, and almost afraid to confess to her cousin the decided step she had taken.

He returned at the hour of dinner, and again repeated his assurance, that nothing could be hoped from a longer stay at Carbury. He entreated her most earnestly to consent to leave it immediately; and argued so forcibly to show the additional danger she might bring on her son in provoking the Dallys, by expressing any doubt of a fact so clearly proved, that she had no courage to tell him that this danger was already incurred, and her person and her purpose alike acknowledged to them.

Her hopes had indeed been nearly extinguished by her interview with West, and she now determined only to see the basket-girl, from whom she felt sure she could obtain the avowal of all she knew, and then depart. She told her cousin that she would remain there but for one day longer, and be ready to return to town on the next.

The Sergeant heard this declaration with extreme satisfaction; but he suffered only a small portion of it to be perceptible.

“ You are right, my dearest cousin,” he said; “ your admirable mind will in time recover its tone, and you will be able to adopt the line of conduct best suited to the unhappy circumstances. We must all be deeply thankful that Edward has escaped; much may be done to render him comfortable abroad. He is still young enough to love the land of his adoption.”

Lady Darcy strove to suppress the rising groan. “ The Earl of Darcy,” she began—but did not go on. Pride was quenched in misery, and rising hastily, she left the room, more than ever convinced that nothing like real sympathy existed in the mind of her cousin.

CHAPTER XVII.

This is such stuff as dreams are made of.—SHAKSPEARE.

THE evening passed heavily with the unhappy mother; she was conscious that her purpose had failed, and felt, as Milton beautifully says of Samson—" Her hopes all flat," while

" Nature within her seemed, in all her functions,
Weary of herself."

It was in vain that Nixon Oglander sought to make her forget every thing but himself; she hardly knew that he was endeavouring to please her; and though she mechanically replied to him from time to time, every word she uttered plainly indicated the absence of her mind. Immediately after breakfast on the following

morning, the Sergeant left her for the purpose of taking one more walk to the village street, with a view, as he said, of hearing any fresh gossip that might be stirring on the subject.

Lady Darcy remained in her room till the hour at which Mrs. Gardiner had told her that Susan Norris was sure to be seen on the shore. She then descended the cliff, but the girl was not at the place where she had seen her yesterday ; she walked slowly on, thinking that some accident had delayed her daily walk. The weather was delightful, and spite of the sorrow at her heart, Lady Darcy felt refreshed by the gentle breeze from the sea.

Carbury Cove is formed by two projecting headlands of rock. The cliff between them appears to have receded from the sea, and forms a deep crescent, the horns of which are the above-mentioned rocks. Half an hour's walking brought Lady Darcy to the base of one of these. The smooth sand offered a tempting path round it; and remembering that the person she wished to see, must pass it in her way to

Lyme, she indulged the inclination she felt to prolong her walk a little farther.

Nothing of the kind could be more beautiful than the view which presented itself to Lady Darcy, as she turned the corner of this rock. The rays of a bright autumn sun danced upon the wide expanse of water that stretched itself before her. In the offing rolled lazily several ships, and smaller craft, at anchor; while the glancing sails of others, more distant, sometimes caught the light, and sometimes seemed to slumber in the dark shadow of a passing cloud. Beyond the point, the cliff became bold and perpendicular, but close under the shelter of the projecting rock, lay a small fishing vessel, high upon the sand. She looked round to see if any persons belonging to it were near, and the gaunt figure of the savage looking West rose to her imagination. No one however was there, and Lady Darcy stood still, to enjoy the scene. Like one of Calcott's delicious pictures, it had no predominant feature to arrest the sight, but offered its soft harmonious ex-

panse, on which the eye reposed rather than gazed.

There was something so soothing and quiet in the spot, and the sweet breeze was so refreshing to her, that she looked round for some place to sit down, and enjoy it. Close beneath the shelter of the rock round which she had passed, large masses of stone had fallen from the cliff above, and on one of these she placed herself. In seeking a position in which she could most conveniently repose, her head was turned towards the projecting barrier, round which she had passed. The place had that air of stillness and solitude, which often gives a feeling of luxury, even to the gayest spirits, but which seems like a temporary protection from sorrow, to the melancholy. While gazing on the dark and rugged wall that rose before her, she remarked a light vapour arising from its fissures, which she soon decided must be the smoke of a fire, however improbable or impossible it appeared that such could be the fact. She raised herself upon the

highest of the masses which lay around, and endeavoured to ascertain from whence it issued; but nothing was to be seen, save the rude and jutting crags. The point at which the smoke rose, was about half way up the cliff, and it immediately occurred to her that it proceeded from some cavern. All she had heard of West, and his associates, suggested the probability that it came from some haunt of theirs. Her first sensation was terror at being alone in such a vicinity; the next, brought an ardent wish to know the secrets of that lurking place. To penetrate into it herself, and alone, was impossible; but she determined that it should be attempted in such a manner as not to endanger the safety of those employed. Her immediate object was to retreat unobserved, but when she remembered the distance she had to walk, and the utter solitude of the path, she felt greatly alarmed.

Several straggling cottages were placed at intervals at no great distance from the edge of the cliff above, and she looked wistfully at the

broken declivity from which the stones had fallen, to see if it were possible for her to climb it. Nothing at all resembling a path appeared, but Lady Darcy had travelled in search of the picturesque, and was no contemptible "crag-woman." Urged by terror, she determined to attempt the ascent. The point at which it appeared the most feasible was where the cliff and the projecting rock formed an angle; this would lead her very close to the point from which the grey vapour still continued to issue; but in this she saw no danger, for when she had reached it, she thought she should be near enough to the dwellings on the summit, to make herself heard. Encouraged by this idea, she commenced her arduous undertaking, and found that, though laborious, it was by no means dangerous to her steady head. She made her way from crag to crag, nor paused to look below, till obliged to stop from exhaustion of strength, and want of breath. While resting to recover herself, she fancied she heard the sound of human voices near her. She felt frightened,

but the eager glance she threw round, showed no object to justify her fear. Assured that for the present she was alone, her courage returned, and she determined to avail herself of her singular position to ascertain, if possible, the situation of the persons whose voices she still distinctly heard. After listening attentively for a few minutes, she became convinced that they were very near her, and that, could she discover the aperture from whence the sound issued, and approach a little nearer to it, she should be able to distinguish what was said.

She moved gently, and warily in this direction, but her progress was both difficult and dangerous; yet still she contrived to advance, till she found herself on a ledge of rock that afforded her again a safe station; having gained it, she once more paused to listen, and to her great mortification she found that the sound had either ceased, or that she had reached a spot where it was no longer audible. She rested for a moment, both to recover strength, and to

ascertain whether the conversation had been only suspended: but no second sound reached her. She again reconnoitered her position; not only was the place on which she stood level, but the black rock rose from it, smooth and perpendicular, as the wall of a house.

When she first looked round, the smoke which had so plainly, as she thought, indicated that the place was inhabited, was no longer visible; but having gone to the very verge of her little platform, and looking upwards to the wall of rock, she again saw the gray vapour rising into the air immediately above it. The small level space on which she stood terminated at an abrupt angle of this wall, and it appeared to her, that if she could make her way round it, she would probably be again within hearing of the voices. She drew near the verge, but the giddy precipice that fell directly from it, made her recoil.

Again she approached it, and by clinging to a natural buttress contrived to look round the corner of the rock. The objects which then

met her view convinced her that she was within a few feet of the cavern.

A terrace of about fifty yards long, but not more than five in width, stretched along the face of the cliff at right angles from the spot where she stood, but eight or ten feet lower. It was covered with coarse grass, and on this were laid many small utensils of domestic use, which appeared to have been recently washed, and placed there to dry; several muskets rested against the rock, round which she leant, and at a frightfully short distance from her, lay a huge wolf dog, on a spot so evidently trodden, as plainly to indicate the entrance to the cave. The consciousness that the slightest movement might alarm the dog, who, by giving notice of her proximity, would inevitably throw her into the power of his owners, made her retreat most cautiously to the farthest corner of her giddy station. When she looked upon the pass by which she had reached it, she shuddered to see what she had done, and felt it would be quite impossible to return by the same route. Her

distress became very great; to descend directly from the little platform, she felt would be nothing short of throwing herself from a precipice, yet she knew that the neighbourhood of the dog made every moment of delay most perilous.

She examined the side opposite to that which overlooked the entrance to the cavern, and feared that the descent from it was impossible, but turning her eyes upwards, she discovered such projections and inequalities as she thought would enable her to climb up from it.

The attempt was hazardous; but her situation had become almost desperate, and summoning all her strength, and habitual self-possession, she began the ascent. A few steps showed that it was less difficult than it appeared, she hastened her movements, for she again distinctly heard the sound of voices. A few more laborious steps placed her safely on another level, and a moment more sufficed to convince her that she stood on the roof of the cavern. It was evident that the sounds she had heard issued from it by means of the hole by which the smoke found

its vent. She cautiously approached the chimney, which opened at the distance of a few feet from where she stood, and seating herself close beside it, but in such a manner as not to impede the light, she immediately found that she could, without difficulty, overhear every word uttered in the chamber below. The first sentence she distinguished, was in the voice of a woman, but no gentle one. She appeared to be scolding some one.

“ You’re a precious one, ar’n’t ye? you see the boy’s as weak as a rat, and refuse a drop of spirit to keep the life in him.”

“ ’Tis all for him, and none for yourself, that you want it, I suppose ?”

These words, spoken in an accent of bitter taunt, made Lady Darcy shake from head to foot ; for they were uttered in the deep hoarse voice of William West.

A volley of vulgar abuse followed from the female, but it was difficult to catch the words from the vehemence of her utterance, and still more so to understand the low, and dissolute

slang in which she spoke. The man retorted in the same strain, and Lady Darcy began to fear she should gain nothing but terror by her perilous adventure, when another voice struck her ear. It was the voice of youth, and though it gave utterance to coarseness, and blasphemy, it sounded less abhorrent to her ears than that of the man, who had so lately threatened the life of her child.

She listened earnestly for the words of this new speaker, and at last caught the following, "I'll hold it no longer, I tell you;—you talk of making lots of money by the job, but what the devil am I the better for it, mewed up here like a rat in a trap?"—Who can paint the feelings of Lady Darcy on hearing these words? It was Dally who spoke; it was impossible to doubt it; again she listened, and life seemed to hang on what she should next hear.

"'Tis queer of you, Dick," said the woman "to curse this fashion, at being kept, and tended like a gentleman, when you know, that if you had'n't been here, you'd have been in

the gaol by this, or swinging in the front of it, for what I know, for that pretty job at Charmouth, that none of us was the better for."

"I'd have taken care of that, I warrant, mother; but any how I'm not such a gull as you take me for. Let me touch the gold; let me have my girl, and the child, and enough to drink, and I'll lead this ferret's life a little longer to please you; but, by the God that made me, I'll be off if you don't."

Did the earth contain a being so perfectly happy as Lady Darcy?

Her Edward, her Earl of Darcy, was her own again. She had heard enough; the wretches were in her power. Braced by the joy that seemed dancing through her veins, she felt that her limbs would not fail her now in the ascent to the village, once there—she moved to leave the spot, but the voice of West arrested her for a moment; it was no longer threatening, but promised as coaxingly as such a voice could, that the complainer should be satisfied, "and 'tis only till his cursed kin are off Dick; then

you may heave away with plenty of money, and take your girl with you if you like."

A loud laugh closed this speech, and before it had ceased to ring through the cavern, Lady Darcy was straining against the steep hill, which seemed to her impatience to rise higher and higher before her as she advanced. At length she reached the summit,—happy, supremely happy, but pale, breathless, and exhausted. She looked towards the still distant village, and feared she had not strength to reach it. How torturing is the feeling of weakness when much is to be done!

She darted forwards, but the effort was in vain; she sank on the turf totally overpowered by agitation and weakness. A very few moments restored her sufficiently to permit her rising, and she again hurried onward. She thought she would stop at the first cottage; but on reaching it, the difficulty of explaining her situation, and of immediately obtaining the assistance she wanted, deterred her, and she pushed on for the dwelling of her humble friend.

Mrs. Gardiner saw her approach, and opened her door to receive her ; but before Lady Darcy could reach it, her strength entirely failed, and she fell senseless to the ground. The poor woman rushed forward, but too late to save her from falling. Her cries soon brought her neighbours to the spot, and by their assistance, Lady Darcy was conveyed, still quite insensible, into Mrs. Gardiner's house.

A messenger was despatched for the village doctor, and another to the hotel for "the gentleman." Sergeant Oglander arrived first, and dreadfully alarmed at her situation, almost lost his habitual composure, from the embarrassment in which he found himself as to what was best to be done.

He could not endure the idea of her continuing in the cottage, and yet dreaded the danger of the removal. Fortunately it was not long before the medical man arrived, who declared it impossible to move her at present. His first efforts were directed to the recovery of her senses ; in this he soon succeeded, but it appeared

that she had received some serious injury; for though she opened her eyes, and by a deep sigh, gave indication of returning life, she looked unconscious of her situation, and quite unable to move; he examined her limbs, and found them without injury, and no visible contusion was to be seen on the head. He then proceeded to bleed her—at first with little success; but after a few moments, the blood flowed freely, the colour revisited her lips and cheeks, she looked round, stretched out her hand to Mrs. Gardiner, and pressing that of the good woman to her bosom burst into tears.

“Do you think, sir, she can be safely moved to the hotel?” impatiently demanded the Sergeant.

Mr. Allen, the apothecary, replied, that certainly he saw no immediate danger from it, but that he should consider it adviseable to permit her lying perfectly still for an hour, before it was attempted. Mrs. Gardiner’s bed had been brought down, and laid on the kitchen floor; and on this lay the beautiful Lady Darcy, half

conscious of the happiness that awaited her, half fearing it might escape her by delay, but totally unable to give the orders she wished, or even to communicate the tale she had to tell.

Mr. Allen found her pulse so low, that he ventured to give her a small quantity of wine, though still feeling very uncertain as to the degree of injury she might have received.

The strength this gave enabled her to express her wish of speaking to Sergeant Oglander, upon which, he desired the apothecary and the women who had remained in the room, to withdraw; but Lady Darcy made a sign to Mrs. Gardiner to remain with her.

When the door was closed, with a smile of triumphant happiness, and clasping the hand of her cousin, she exclaimed, "I have found him, Nixon; I have found Dally alive, recovered, perfectly well! Mrs. Gardiner, you will see your benefactor again; my boy will return! Edward! my dear Edward!" her voice was choaked in delicious tears.

Nixon Oglander turned pale, but it was only

for a moment, and no one remarked it. The widow Gardiner joined her joyful tears to those of the happy mother.

"Where? where? my lady," she exclaimed, "let us get hold of the young villain this moment."

"Yes, yes," said Lady Darcy, "it is that, Nixon, it is that you must do—instantly."

Her strength was evidently failing. Mrs. Gardiner put the wine glass to her lips; "One little drop, my lady, only one drop; for God's sake tell us where?"

"Not for the world," exclaimed Oglander, seizing the glass, "not for the world, without permission of Mr. Allen, we may destroy her! Go, my good woman, to the hotel, I bade him wait there; say not a syllable of what you have heard, or all may be lost; but bring the doctor instantly."

Mrs. Gardiner left the cottage; and then the Sergeant, approaching the bed, took the hand of Lady Darcy, and starting, as if alarmed, said—

"Good God, how weak she is! Cousin, dear cousin, take this wine, it is indeed necessary."

She swallowed it readily, and again drawing a deep sigh, said—

“I know not, Nixon, if what I feel be more than weakness. I hope not, for I have been greatly fatigued.”

“But speak, my dearest Lady Darcy, what have you discovered?”

“Dally—the boy my son was said to have murdered.”

“But where? delay not a moment to tell me, or he may again escape.”

Lady Darcy felt the truth of this, and raising herself on the bed, she described to him shortly, but distinctly, the position of the place where she had left him; conjuring him to lose no time in going thither with a sufficient force to secure him.

“Think not of me,” she said, “this good woman shall take care of me, but hasten to the village without a moment’s delay, and collect people enough to prevent the possibility of failure.”

Mr. Allen entered as she spoke.

"I must leave this lady for a few moments, sir," said Sergeant Oglander, addressing him, "and I request you to take charge of her. I think she may now be safely removed to her apartments at the hotel."

Without waiting for a reply, he hastened from the cottage. Mrs. Gardiner, who was following the apothecary, paused at the door, to look after him; the hurried manner of his quitting the house, connected with what Lady Darcy had said, convinced her that he was engaged in the pursuit of Dally, and knowing how many would be leagued together to protect him, she was terrified at seeing him set off alone.

Too eager to forward the object she had in view, to think of the danger of alarming Lady Darcy, she addressed her suddenly.

"Oh, my lady, the gentleman may as well put his head into a lion's mouth, as think of encountering that nest of dare-devils alone."

"No, no! he is gone to the village for help. Did you not see him go towards the village?"

"I saw him run, my lady, as fast as his legs could carry him, towards the cliff."

A frightful suspicion shot cold to the heart of the unfortunate Lady Darcy, "To the cliff?" she feebly exclaimed, and immediately relapsed into insensibility. It was long before Mr. Allen succeeded in again restoring her, and when at length animation returned, he feared that fever was coming on. Without farther delay, he had her conveyed to the hotel, and put to bed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

O time you must untangle this, not I ;
It is too hard a knot for me to untie.

SHAKSPEARE.

Mrs. GARDINER consented to take the office of nurse upon her, and fully convinced that Lady Darcy's reiterated entreaties that people might be sent to the cliff, did not proceed from delirium, she exerted herself to the utmost to induce Mr. Allen to pay attention to this request. Finding him, however, entirely persuaded that Lady Darcy was not in her senses, she begged Mr. Wilmot might be sent for, who she knew was acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. On the arrival of this gentleman Lady Darcy expressed the greatest

satisfaction, and with more coherence than she had spoken since her removal, she endeavoured to explain to him the necessity of immediately apprehending Dally ; but Mr. Wilmot, though he listened to her with the most patient attention, never for a moment doubted that all she uttered was the raving of delirium.

Nor was he at all surprised to find her in this state. He knew that her imagination had been long occupied by a vision which he was thoroughly persuaded had no foundation in truth, and that the final disappointment of her hopes should have produced this melancholy effect, was more to be lamented than wondered at. Mrs. Gardiner was the only person among those permitted to approach Lady Darcy, who paid the slightest attention to what fell from her.

She knew that she had conversed with West the day before, and had been walking below the cliff for above an hour, for the express purpose of obtaining information on this subject. It appeared to her by no means impossible that

she might have succeeded in this; and her constantly requesting that a body of armed men might be sent to arrest Dally, though it was now uttered wildly, convinced her that the agitation in which she had returned from this walk, had been occasioned by some circumstance which had occurred there.

Impressed with this conviction, and considerably alarmed for the safety of the gentleman whom she had seen running so incautiously alone towards the scene of danger, she entreated the landlady to take her place for a short time, and hastened herself to the house of the constable, to whom she related all the circumstances, in such a manner as to induce him to comply with her wish of going properly armed and protected, to examine into the truth of Lady Darcy's statement. But in complying with her repeated and earnest supplications, that men should go to "the cliff," Mrs. Gardiner had no other idea than of searching the hut before mentioned, as the present residence

of the boy's mother. In an hour or two after the good woman had resumed her station in the sick room, the constable sent to call her out, and told her that he had been at Mother Dally's hovel, which he had ransacked, and examined in every part, but in vain; the place was entirely deserted, and the fire gone out on the hearth. Before the report of the constable arrived, Sergeant Oglander had returned to the hotel, and learning from Mr. Allen that Lady Darcy was suffering from a violent access of fever, and perfectly delirious, he abstained from entering her room, and employed himself in writing to his uncle to inform him of her unhappy situation, and requesting that he would come immediately to Carbury. Having performed this necessary duty, he went to the parsonage, and conversed with Mr. Wilmot on the unhappy alienation of mind which had fallen upon his cousin. He told him, that, notwithstanding the wildness of her statement, he had immediately repaired to the wretched

hut that hung half way down the cliff, which had been pointed out to him as the dwelling of the Dallys.

This, as far as he could understand from Lady Darcy's wandering description, was the place she meant to indicate as that where she averred that she had seen Richard Dally.

But he had found it, he said, totally deserted. Mr. Wilmot deplored with much feeling this melancholy termination to Lady Darcy's mental sufferings, but owned that it grieved more than it surprised him.

"I greatly fear," he continued, "that if her life be spared, her mind will not regain its tone. In my opinion, her reason has been partially disordered ever since the dreadful catastrophe reached her; and now I fear it is entirely gone."

The Sergeant sighed deeply as he replied to this most distressing supposition.

"Alas, my dear sir, I have but too much reason to believe that you are right. It was impossible for me not to see that her fine in-

telleet has been wandering ever since I have been with her. But I have constantly flattered myself, that when once she could be brought to admit the truth of the statements which she has hitherto denied, she would by degrees become accustomed to her misfortune, and recover her composure."

"Never, my dear sir," replied Mr. Wilmot, "never. The statement of the facts which I drew up, and which was substantiated by so many witnesses, was so clear and convincing, that nothing but insanity could have made it possible for any one to doubt its truth."

Sergeant Oglander felt that these were the words of wisdom, and with another deep sigh, he pressed the speaker's hand, and took his leave.

Lady Darcy's father arrived at Carbury with the least possible delay, and most sad was the scene that awaited him.

The life of his only child was despaired of, and her ravings were incessant, and most heart-rending. The injury which she had received

from her fall had been trifling, and the bleeding would have prevented all ill effects from it; but the agony of her mind when the idea of treachery in her cousin occurred to her, and when she afterwards saw that her statements were either not understood, or not believed, together with the excessive fatigue and agitation she had undergone, were too much for a frame already weakened by previous anxiety. Mr. Oglander was accompanied by an eminent physician from London, but he made little change in the treatment the apothecary had pursued. A very few days, he said, must decide the event. He could give no opinion on the probable state of her mind, should she survive the fever, but assured Mr. Oglander that her delirium had no symptoms at present, which were not extremely usual in such a state.

The malady was a violent phrenzy fever. During the course of these eventful days, however, Nixon Oglander found time and opportunity to convince both his uncle, and the

physician, that Lady Darcy's reason was gone before the fever came on.

Mr. Wilmot completely confirmed this account; and the unfortunate father hardly knew whether to hope or fear the return of her bodily health, when so horrible a calamity was likely to remain upon her.

The prediction of the physician was verified; three days after the arrival of Mr. Oglander, the fever left Lady Darcy, but it left her in a state of such extreme weakness that he dared not enter the room, lest she should recognise him, and experience a degree of agitation too violent for her strength. Mrs. Gardiner, who had never left her, assured him that her senses were perfectly restored, and that she was sure nothing would do her so much good as seeing him. Dr. Barnes soon began to agree with the nurse in opinion; and though he confessed that it was very possible the same degree of derangement which had existed before the fever, might still remain, he gave Mrs. Gardiner per-

mission to announce to her the arrival of her father.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed. "Let me see him instantly."

Had not the dreadful fear of her permanent insanity checked his joy, the interview would have been a most happy one, for it was evident to him that her strength was rapidly returning; and to her, the sight of her father seemed to assure the certainty of all her hopes and wishes. Dr. Barnes had strongly insisted on the necessity of making this first visit a short one, and Mr. Oglander, tenderly kissing the hand he held, was leaving her with the delightful hope that her perfect recovery was possible, when she said—

"One word, my dearest father, only one word, and I will let you go—Is he taken?"

The unhappy father disengaged his hand, and hurried from the room.

"What does this mean, Mrs. Gardiner? Has he then escaped?" inquired the agitated Lady Darcy.

Mrs. Gardiner was a poor and uneducated woman, but like many of that class, had a keen faculty of observation.

She had repeatedly listened to the discussions which had taken place, as to the state of Lady Darcy's mind previous to her accident, and observed the quiet, unobtrusive, but uniform manner, in which Sergeant Oglander sought to make it appear that her intellect had been disordered at that time. No one addressed any inquiry to her on the subject, and she did not presume to make any observation ; but she not only felt perfectly persuaded that Lady Darcy had been in her right senses during their former interviews, but also that the "soft-spoken gentleman" was somehow or other strangely determined to make it appear otherwise.

With these thoughts revolving in her mind, she answered Lady Darcy as soothingly as possible, without deceiving her in a manner that might afterwards prove injurious.

"Compose yourself, my dear lady ; all depends upon your keeping yourself quiet. If the villain

is above ground, he shall be found, my lady, don't you doubt of that; the whole county shall turn out after him, rather than we will miss of him."

"Then he is not taken?"

"Not yet, my lady; but pray keep yourself quiet. The truth is, my lady, that all the people felt so sure he was dead, that when your ladyship said he was not, they seemed to think—you know, my lady, it might be the fever put it into your ladyship's head."

"And you, Mrs. Gardiner, do you think I was mad, when first I told you that I had been where he was concealed?"

"No, my lady, I do not," replied the woman with emphasis; "and no one will believe it long, if your ladyship will but keep quiet, and be composed."

"I understand you, my good woman, I will do so," and for a quarter of an hour Lady Darcy lay perfectly tranquil, and silent; at the end of that time, she called to her attentive nurse, and said, "Is it Sergeant Oglander that thinks I was insane before my accident?"

"Yes; my lady, him and Mr. Wilmot both say so."

"And what do the people of the house say?"

"That they can't pretend to judge, but that you certainly was very melancholy."

"Did you not tell me, Mrs. Gardiner, that you saw Sergeant Oglander run towards the cliff, when he left me in your cottage?"

"Yes, my lady; but pray take this medicine, it is the time for it, and do not talk any more now."

Lady Darcy swallowed the medicine.

"One word more, Gardiner, and I will be silent. Did you not hear me tell him to go to the village for help, before he attempted to visit the cavern?"

"The cavern? Oh no, my lady, he sent me to fetch the doctor from the hotel, when your ladyship was just going to tell all."

"True! true! I see it all—then Heaven help me!"

Her kind-hearted and grateful attendant,

again assured her that every thing depended upon her keeping herself quiet.

“ If the gentleman be the villain I see you think him, my lady, 'twill be easy enough to thwart him, falsehood seldom can stand long face to face with truth. If your ladyship is in your right senses, your good father and the London doctor will be sure to find it out.”

This prediction, however reasonable, was not fulfilled. It was in vain that the unhappy Lady Darcy reined in all natural vehemence of feeling, however quiet the manner in which she spoke, she saw that the instant she alluded to the conversation she had overheard from the cavern, her hearers considered her as a maniac. It was impossible to reason with them on the subject; for by Dr. Barnes' advice, they broke off the conversation, and left her, as soon as she alluded to it. To Mrs. Gardiner alone she could address herself with any chance of being listened to; and from her she obtained a promise of having the cavern she described sought for, and examined: the very existence of the

place she spoke of, must, she thought, convince her father that at least some part of her statement was founded on fact. But here a most strange and unaccountable disappointment awaited her. Mrs. Gardiner sent her own son, with two or three hardy companions, to explore the spot; the poor woman accompanied them herself to the edge of the cliff, and exactly at the point where Lady Darcy told her she had reached the top, she saw them descend. For above an hour they examined the rocks below in every direction; no trace of a cavern could they find. The level spot which they thought might have been the place described as the roof, had no aperture of any kind, nor could they discover any thing like an opening in the rock beneath it. After this fruitless search, Lady Darcy agreed to her father's often repeated request for her leaving a place so every way fatal to her peace. Though hopeless of any result from it, she left it in charge with Mrs. Gardiner to send her any tidings she could hear of the Dally family.

Before she departed, she learnt that the mother and West were returned to their hut, and stated that they had been only absent for two days at Bridport. She also heard from Gardiner, the night before she returned to London, that it was supposed the poor basket-girl had made away with herself, for no one had seen her for many days past.

It is difficult to imagine a situation more painful than that of Lady Darcy, upon her return to Harding Abbey.

Still suffering under the dreadful misery of seeing her son driven from his country, and loaded with the imputation of a crime, which must make him for ever an exile, knowing that he was guiltless of it, yet perfectly incapable of availing herself of this conviction.

Who could have believed that her journey to Carbury, by converting her hopes into certainty, should have increased the misery of her situation?

Yet such was decidedly the case.

Before this dreadful journey, her influence

with her father was almost unbounded; he admired, and respected, as much as he loved her. By no one had the distinguished talents of which she was conscious, been so justly appreciated as by him; and now—she could not avoid seeing that he considered her as at least partially insane. She attempted once, and but once, to open his eyes to the character of his nephew; but instead of listening to her, he begged her to lie down, felt her pulse, and sent for the physician. In this most painful situation, the narrative must leave her for a time, while it returns again to the party at Rochester.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Such a poverty of grace.—SHAKESPEARE.

THE day which followed the evening so happily past by the wanderers, brought them many visitors. The dictum of Mr. Wilson had gone forth, that they were "respectable," and not even the pertinacious doubts of Mr. Hicks, nor the whispered fears of Mrs. Oaks, could annul its power. Among these visitors the one most agreeable to Miss Gordon, was Madame de Clairville: she was the only person who came alone. All the other ladies came, and went, in little parties, as if rather frightened at the business they were upon. The whole set from Mrs. Bevan's came together, with the

exception of the French woman; and a very solemn entry it was. Miss Gordon could hardly preserve her gravity while she watched the looks and listened to the inuendos of Mrs. Oaks.

"Dear me, ma'am, I didn't think as you'd find any destitution of furniture in my house; and yet you've put in a sight."

"I expect the English are fond of heavy furniture, ma'am," said Mrs. Cornish; "'tis only, I believe, the American and the French who advocate lightness and elegance in their rooms."

"The English are certainly greatly indebted to France for many of their prettiest decorations," replied Miss Gordon.

"Have you been in Paris, Miss Gordon?"

"Never, madam."

"Oh, then I expect you don't know much about the fashions, Miss Gordon."

"Very likely, ma'am."

Mrs. Bevan amused herself by walking about the room, examining and admiring every thing; certain that if it did not belong to Mrs. Oaks

it did to Miss Gordon, and that she must please somebody.

Miss Duncomb, with the air of a person who has a right to examine into the manner in which their acquaintance spend their time, opened successively every book on the table, and regularly shook her head as she closed each of them.

“ Pray, ma'am, to what congregation might you belong in your own country ?”

“ We attended the parish church of Seaton, in the country, and Audley-street chapel, in town.”

“ You have some shining lights, ma'am, among you, though none to equal what you find here.”

“ I think, Miss Gordon,” said the elegant Mrs. Cornish, “ that I should be extravagantly fond of Vauxhall; 'tis the only English thing that ever appeared tolerable to me from description.”

“ I never was there, ma'am,” replied Miss Gordon. The contempt of the lady evidently

increased every moment; and nothing but the rich French satin-stitch upon Miss Gordon's dress kept her within the limits of civility; but even this could not prevent her from saying,

"We don't reckon English ladies very fashionable; the American and the French, I believe, are most the thing now. Do you reckon English ladies fashionable at London?"

"Oh no, ma'am, not at all," said Miss Gordon, laughing.

"I expect, miss, you will be in no hurry to get home again," said Mrs. Bevan, coaxingly; "you must find it so pleasant here, Mrs. Oaks's house and all."

"Rochester must indeed be a most delightful residence; it is impossible to doubt it."

"I expect nobody could doubt it, with such a house and such a minister," said Miss Duncomb.

As Miss Cornish had not yet spoken, Caroline thought it would be civil to address her, and asked the hacknied miss-like question—"Do you play, Miss Cornish?"

"I have had five quarters, ma'am, at New York," answered the young lady, as if rather affronted at the doubt.

"Are you fond of music?"

"No, I don't care about any thing but French; I want to talk French when I go to Paris; but as you hav'n't been at Paris, I suppose you don't care about it."

"Not so exclusively as you do, perhaps."

Still more questions were to be asked, or nothing would be said; so the mistress of the house began again—"Are you a great reader, Miss Duncomb?"

"I read all books assisting to my salvation, ma'am, that I am so lucky as to find."

"I hope, Miss Gordon, your shelves won't scratch my wall," said Mrs. Oaks, "for I see they are stuck smack against it."

"I trust the shelves will do no mischief," replied the young lady, courteously; "but if they do, I will beg you to accept them as a recompence."

The ladies looked at each other.

"That's very genteel, miss, certainly; but yet I don't know but a bit of new paint might be better, for I have got no books to put in 'em, that's a fact."

"Why, they are right down elegant, Mrs. Oaks," exclaimed the astonished Mrs. Bevan; "I'll buy them of you myself, for the value of a pot of paint."

"Time enough for that, Mrs. Bevan," replied her cautious boarder; "mayhap the young lady may change her mind."

"Is there a theatre at Rochester?" inquired Caroline.

A low moan issued from the lips of Miss Duncomb. Mrs. Oaks gave a little gentle "hem." Mrs. Bevan looked timidly round, to see who would reply, and Mrs. Cornish, without the fear either of Miss Duncomb or Mr. Wilson before her, stoutly answered, "Yes, ma'am, a very genteel theatre, and I shall be happy to go with you there whenever you please."

Now, no lady in the house liked to contradict

Mrs. Cornish openly, because she gave tea-parties, and they were all invited; and not only cakes and oysters, but also ices were given in abundance. Nevertheless, she was often listened to with a little shudder; and whenever she went to the play-house, which not unfrequently occurred during the season, Miss Duncomb always relieved her over-burthened conscience, by declaring, that "the forbearance of the Lord was an ensample to his saints;" or else by her constant quotation, when it happened that the frailty of the flesh led her to inter-commune with the worldly, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." Miss Gordon, quite unconscious of the danger she ran, thanked Mrs. Cornish for her kindness, and declared her readiness to attend her whenever an opportunity offered. Miss Duncomb rose and abruptly took leave, and the rest accompanied her out, probably because they had accompanied her in; for Mrs. Cornish began to find out that Miss Gordon was certainly a sightly young woman, and

though only English, was better than no foreigner at all.

As the door closed after them, Caroline half sighed and half yawned as she exclaimed, "Oh, Edward, Edward! this do I bear for thee!"

The next set that entered was Mrs. Wilson, followed by her two daughters, and Mrs. Williams. Caroline's sweetest smiles were given to the relatives of Emily. The two girls were very pretty, so pretty indeed that they were often called like Emily; but when Mrs. Wilson asked Miss Gordon if she perceived the resemblance, not all her wish to be agreeable could prevent her shaking her head, and saying "No."

Mrs. Wilson was a perfect model of silly fanaticism; she affected more piety, and talked more nonsense than any three ladies in Rochester.

The young ladies were very well dressed; and notwithstanding a little air of precision,

they looked more like gentlewomen than any she had seen since she had left New York.

They were considered as the best matches in Rochester; every thing about their house spoke comfort and wealth. It was currently said among the serious presbyterians of the place, that the Lord had multiplied the good man's store, and that he had prospered beyond his fellows by his faith and zeal in the vineyard committed to his care.

There were some, however, who doubted whether this could be the only source of his increasing wealth. He was yearly adding to his possessions; and though his flock, particularly the females of it, appeared always ready for the shears, it was hardly possible that their fleeces had furnished the funds which were known to be out at interest, in more quarters than one.

It was after this party had disappeared that Madame de Clairville entered; and she probably lost her dinner by the length of her visit:

to converse with a lady from Europe, she said, was so delightful!

“ And are you going to stay here, mademoiselle? *Mon dieu!* is it possible! No, no, you will go away, and I shall have only to regret that I have seen you.”

Miss Gordon assured her that she should be in less haste to leave her present residence, from having found so agreeable a neighbour, adding, that she feared she might be the *délaissée*, as it was probable madam would not remain long in a place which she appeared so greatly to dislike.

Madame de Clairville had stood more questioning since her arrival at Rochester, and had evaded telling her sad story with more adroitness than can easily be imagined. Once, on her way from Perfect Bliss, she had been beguiled by the seeming good-humoured interest expressed by a fellow-traveller, to narrate all she had suffered; but the only remark it elicited was, that “ Europeans were not smart enough

to come to America, for they were sure to leave their money behind them."

From that moment she had buried her sorrows and her anxieties, her hopes and her fears, at the very bottom of her heart; and no one at Rochester knew any thing more about her; than that she was a widow, with nothing to do but to amuse herself, and make the most of a small income. She had borne this chilling winter of the heart, patiently, but not without feeling its bitterness; and the idea that in the beautiful English girl she might find a friend, tempted her once more to repeat her story. She told it with so much *naïveté*, yet with so much feeling, that Caroline was profoundly touched; and all the fatigue of the morning, and the probable *ennui* of Rochester were forgotten, while she indulged the delightful hope of assisting her to return to her country and her child.

Mrs. Williams not only brought her sister and nieces to call on Miss Gordon, but she did not fail to testify her obedience to the will of

her brother, by inviting the English strangers to drink tea at her house, two days after he had signified his will that it should be done.

It is only in the artificial state of society which is found in the Old World, that it is necessary to bespeak people a month beforehand, for the purpose of regaling them with boiling water, and frozen cream. In America, a woman says to her neighbours, "Come to-morrow to tea with me," and they come, without let or hindrance, by dozens, or by scores, as the case may be.

Mrs. Williams was determined to do honour both to Captain Birdmore's china, and to the commands of her brother; and she and her pretty Emily spent the whole of two days in going from house to house, throughout the town of Rochester, and saying to every one of sufficient fashion, "Will you come and drink tea with us on Saturday? we have got a few friends, and the English people are coming." This form was as powerful in its effect, as any "*Duc ad me*, to call fools into a circle," that was ever used.

So great indeed was the curiosity to meet the party, who a short time before were in danger of being driven from the town by acclamation, as suspected felons, that not one of the invited but appeared at Mrs. Williams's party.

When Miss Gordon and her father entered, the walls of the parlour were lined with females, and the centre of the room was occupied by a host of gentlemen.

Mr. Warner and Mr. Wilson, immediately stepped from among them, to shake hands with Mr. Gordon, while Emily came forward to take possession of his daughter. Lord Darcy's earnest request to be permitted to pass the evening in writing to his mother had been complied with, and he remained at home.

This arrangement was unfavourable to the popularity of Miss Gordon, for when Lord Darcy was not with her, she was apt to forget the peculiarity of their situation; and on this occasion she indulged in the display of a little hauteur, in return for all the undisguised curiosity with which she was regarded. Even the ladies

who had previously called on her, seemed more inclined to stare, than to converse, and for half an hour after Emily had placed her in the seat she had carefully reserved on the sofa, it required all Miss Gordon's *savoir vivre*, not to appear embarrassed at the silent and earnest observation of which she was the object.

Immediately upon her being seated, Mrs. Williams came to her, and making a solemn curtsy, said, "How do you do, ma'am, I hope I see you well?"

This being spoken, and replied to, the lady retired. Emily contrived to hover near her for a little while, but was called away by her mother's saying, "I expect Anastasia wants you, Emily Williams."

Thus left to herself, Caroline looked round the room; not an eye but was fixed upon her, and the little conversation which was going on among the ladies, consisted in a cautious whisper between neighbours, of which it was but too easy to perceive that she was the subject.

It was impossible to bear this long. Mr.

Warner had approached to pay his compliments to her, and when he was again about to retreat to the group of standing gentlemen, she stopped him by saying, "Will you give me your arm across the room, Mr. Warner?" and before he well understood her purpose, she rose, and passed her arm within his. This action seemed to dissolve the spell which had fallen upon the female tongues; but among the few phrases that reached her, still fewer were intelligible, which considering the spirit that appeared to pervade them, was not much to be regretted.

"Lock and lock, I declare! thank the praise, I was born in America; now shou'dn't you be right down consternated, if you saw Benjamina do that?"

"I cannot realize how any girl can get upon such a lay, and yet keep her standing."

"If I live from July to eternity, I shall never oblivate that go."

"How she swiggles her way through the gentlemen!. Did you ever?"

"My! It's musical enough to be sure, just to watch her ways."

While these sharp darts flew lightly past her, on their foreign idiom, Miss Gordon continued her adventurous progress to the place which Madame de Clairville occupied at the farther end of the long apartment.

Madame de Clairville was not a great person at Rochester. The ladies had discovered that she had but two visiting gowns in the world. She was invited to the parties, because she was "one of the ladies at Mrs. Bevan's," but as no one ever saw even a new ribbon about her, since the day of her arrival, now nearly six months ago; as she spoke English with difficulty, and generally smiled in the wrong place, when she was spoken to; as she belonged to no congregation, and never gave tea, she was considered as a little nobody.

Miss Gordon's marked attention to her created great surprise, till some one cleverly observed that "'twas natural enough for Europeans to be glad to see one another."

Madame de Clairville was delighted. She rose to meet the fair stranger with an air of graceful *empressement*, well calculated to make her gown forgotten, at least by Caroline. There was no space to admit Miss Gordon next her, and perceiving this, the young lady took the arm of madame, and again crossed the room to the fire-place, where, to the unspeakable astonishment of the party, they stood together chatting in French, with an air of easy gaiety, that drew down many a disapproving, "My!" from the fair spectators.

Mr. Wilson now approached them, leading forward his son, who entered into conversation in French and in English, with both ladies, without restraint, and really deserved some gratitude for his knight errantry; for he was the only young man who ventured to approach them. His gallantry, however, did not endure long, for he soon quitted them, and left the room.

Tea, coffee, and cakes, were now handed round, by two smartly dressed young women.

Emily followed them into the room; her cheeks wore an unusual glow, and she was evidently agitated. "C'est une petite ange que cette Emilie—quel dommage qu'elle va rester ici toute sa vie!" said Madame de Clairville. Emily was quite shocked at seeing them standing, and immediately brought two chairs from different parts of the room, for their accommodation, which she placed in the small vacant spaces on each side the chimney-piece. "Cannot we manage better than that, Emily?" said Miss Gordon, removing her chair to the opposite side; "I must hear the end of what madame was saying," and without ceremony she placed herself *vis-à-vis* to the little French woman, with her back to the majority of the company.

It required all brother Wilson's influence to preserve Miss Gordon's good name after this.

"Did you ever! such airs!"

"What confidence!"

"'Tis just to show off, that she can talk French."

"Nothing but that, you may allot upon it,

or she would never pick out that little shabby body."

The little shabby body, however, was perfectly delighted. She had been long enough among the set which formed the present party, to comprehend all that was going on, and keenly enjoyed the cool style in which Miss Gordon seemed disposed to amuse herself in the best way circumstances would permit. The whimsical contrast between her manners, and those of the rest of the party was very amusing, and the spirits of Madame de Clairville were for the time so gay, that hardly in Paris had she said more sprightly things, or appeared to greater advantage.

Mr. Gordon, from his station among the gentlemen, saw all that was passing, and though not sorry to see Caroline amused, wished, if possible, to check the vivacity which he perceived attracted too much attention. He drew near, with the intention of giving a hint to his lively daughter; but Madame de Clairville was giving a little *historiette* with so much grace,

and gaiety, that it was impossible to interrupt her, and before she had finished it, he was strongly tempted rather to join the party, than to break it up.

He told them both, however, that they were clearly offending against Rochester etiquette, which evidently required that they should both sit with their backs to the wall, smile seldom, and laugh not at all.

"And what will befall us, if we disobey?" demanded Madame de Clairville.

"Must I tell you, madame?"

"Positively, monsieur."

"Well then, you will find no lovers among the gentlemen,—and no friends among the ladies."

"My!" exclaimed Madame de Clairville, mimicking the national tone; "is not that dreadful?"

"Not for me, if you will only except my little Emily—*que voilà*."

Emily came, on hospitable thoughts intent, followed by the "helps," bearing trays filled

with very good things, but most heterogeneously assembled. Ices and oysters, pound-cake and salt beef, were offered together, and not unfrequently received upon the same plate. After this ceremony had passed round, Mrs. Williams approached Miss Gordon, in a solemn and stately manner, and inquired if she would favour the company by playing on the piano.

Caroline looked saucy; but a glance from her father changed the expression of her eyes, and she modestly said she had rather not play before so large a party.

Mrs. Williams left her, but in a few moments Emily came, and said blushing, and as if vexed at her errand, that she was sent to ask if she could sing?

“Who sent you, my dear?”

“Mrs. Pringle desired mamma would ask, before her daughter began.”

“Then please to tell Mrs. Pringle, my dear—”

Her father looked at her beseechingly, evidently fearing some little vivacity.

"Do you wish me to perform at the Rochester parties, papa?"

"Nay, my dear, do as you will—but soften your refusal, or you may get into a scrape."

She again looked mischievously inclined for a moment, but then said with great gentleness—

"Be so kind as to tell the ladies, my dear Emily, that it would give me great pleasure to oblige them, were it in my power, but it is not—I shall, however, be very happy to listen to them."

Emily acquitted herself so well in repeating this answer, that a movement was immediately perceptible towards the piano. Madame de Clairville said it would be necessary to approach; and Mr. Gordon giving an arm to each, they joined the party that now crowded round the instrument. A tall awkward girl, but, like almost all Americans, with a handsome face, began drawing off her gloves; they were very tight, and the operation took some time, but the moment it was completed, she sat down suddenly, and instantly began singing, with-

out prelude or symphony, "My beautiful maid."

To describe the manner in which this was done, is impossible. The singing, the playing, the voice, the finger, the time, the style, were all much too extraordinary to be conceived from words.

Mr. Gordon felt a slight quiver in each of the little hands that rested on his arms, but both ladies were too highly bred, to move a muscle of the face.

When the performance was ended, the young lady sprung up, as abruptly as she had sat down.

Mr. Robert Wilson was next requested to play. The instrument was a very poor one, but the moment he touched it, no doubt could remain of his power; he played with the hand of a master.

After a rich and imaginative prelude, he sang one of Dr. Arne's beautiful songs, with a voice that might have made his fortune in any country in Europe.

strange is it, that he should sit caterwauling there, just like the son of any other man. 'Tis awful, Miss Duncomb!"

"Mrs. Barnet, I guess, ma'am, that you do not know the young man as well as I do; he is as prayerfully disposed as any young man I know; and were we advanced enough to missionize from this, I cannot realize that there is any one more fit to promote christianization among the heathen, and to happify his converts, than young Mr. Robert."

"I don't wish to blame your associational feelings, Miss Duncomb; but to eventuate what I was going to say, I must confess that for a young man of such capacity, he ought by this to have showed more anxietude for the welfare of the church. Dear me, Miss Duncomb, only look at Miss Martin's muslin!—isn't it as coarse as hominy?"

"I wish 'twas a little higher about the neck, Mrs. Barnet, and I would not fault the muslin. That young miss would conduct better, if she thought less of her beauty."

“That’s a fact. I wish it would convene to Anastasia to bring the oysters this way; I feel altogether faintish.”

The oysters and ices approached for the fourth time, and Miss Gordon hastened to take leave, but first engaged Madame de Clairville to pass the next evening with her.

CHAPTER XIX.

Music oft hath such a charm.—SHAKSPEARE.

As soon as breakfast was over the next morning, the kind-hearted Caroline hastened to inquire for her young friend. She found her seated at work, and with the appearance of being perfectly well. Mrs. Williams did not appear; and Emily sprang to meet Miss Gordon, delighted to see her again without the restraint of company.

“What was the matter last night, my little Emily? Why did you steal away from us?”

“Do not ask me, Miss Gordon; but I was not ill.”

“I may not ask you? You are a strange

girl ; but you shall have your way on this point, if you will let me have mine on another."

" Agreed. What is your pleasure, my dear Miss Gordon ?"

" I must have you to spend the day with me."

" You do not fear my opposing your will in this, I am very sure," answered the delighted Emily ; " but I must ask my mother's leave."

" Do so, and I will wait for you."

Emily returned immediately.

" Mamma will be very happy to let me go, but she wants to know if you have any other company, because of my dress ?"

" Only Madame de Clairville, Emily ; and I believe papa means to call on that marvellous cousin Robert of your's, to ask him for the evening. Papa, my dear, is a little bit *fanatico per la musica*, and it will be well if cousin Robert does not spend above half his evenings with us. He has a superb voice, I confess—but I do not like him."

Emily had bent her head, as if seeking some

object on the table; but as Caroline finished her speech, she turned towards her with a look of extreme pleasure, exclaiming "Thank God!"

"What a very odd little creature you are! Why should you thank God because I do not like your cousin?"

"Only because I do not like him myself, I suppose."

"Nay, that is absolutely spiteful, Emily."

"No, I am not spiteful;—but will you forgive me? If he is coming to you this evening, I would rather fix some other day for me."

Caroline looked at her for a moment—"As you will, little mystery; but make haste, or papa will be set forth, on musical thoughts intent, before we can stop him."

Emily begged not to be made the reason for such a request.

"You shall not, dear; and papa shall lose nothing, for Edward and I will sing double for it;—by the by, you sing too, Emily, for I

remember cousin Robert desired to sing a duet with you last night."

Emily did not reply.

"I have it, Emily," exclaimed Caroline, laughing; "you went to bed to escape this duet?"

"Say no more about it, dearest Miss Gordon: if you should ever love me well enough to wish it, I will tell you all." Her eyes were full of tears.

"I love you well enough now for any thing, my sweet Emily; but my curiosity shall not cost you so dear. Go, my love, and make what change in your dress your mamma wishes. I will wait for you."

Emily did not answer, but gratefully kissed the hand of her friend.

While Miss Gordon waits, the reader may be let into secrets which it was not her lot to know till some time afterwards. When the widow Williams and her daughter first came to Rochester, Emily was thirteen years old, and Robert Wilson twenty-five. The near rela-

tionship of their mothers threw them continually together; and the uncommon loveliness of his little cousin immediately attracted the attention of Wilson.

Young as she was, he saw she possessed talent and capacity, which a little encouragement and a little cultivation would render brilliant. He was himself gifted by nature in no ordinary degree; his mind was imaginative and poetical; his senses were organised with that exquisite susceptibility, which, if the heart be pure, and the mind well regulated, forms the perfection of our nature, but which, if both are depraved, only serves to constitute the perfect sensualist.

Had he learnt to worship the Maker of the universe, instead of adoring his works, young Wilson might have been a glorious being; as it was, with all his force of intellect, and endless versatility of talent, he was but a noxious reptile.

With infantine acuteness he had discovered the hypocrisy of his father's religious seeming;

and at fourteen, was, as he boasted to his familiars, an Atheist on conviction. This sect would be better described were they called Self-idolaters. When once the heart is really weaned from its first, innate, natural feeling of adoration to the God that gave it life, and love, and joy, it invariably turns its affections inward, and self becomes its god. Such was the history of Robert Wilson. He was a proof that total depravity of character may be attained with very little aid from external circumstances. Some moralists have thought that if large cities, and the crowded haunts of men are avoided, vice cannot reach us; they know but little of the human heart who think so. It is possible that fellowship and example may encourage to bolder demonstrations of wickedness, but a very confined sphere of action, and a very limited circle of associates, will suffice for the complete corruption of a genuine Atheist.

There arose a sort of tacit agreement between the father and son, that they should show a perfect unity in external observances, and exercise

a mutual forbearance from examining further. Had they penetrated, however, to the centre of each other's heart, they would have found no subject of dispute ; no single point in theory, on which they differed. To preserve this perfect harmony in practice, it was necessary that their pursuit of pleasure should lead them different ways. They did so : and never did father and son exhibit a picture of more perfect concord : their attachment was, in fact, the admiration of all Rochester. This Robert Wilson looked on the angelic beauty of his cousin, listened to the untaught warblings of her delicious voice, marked her eye kindle, and her soft cheek glow, as he let in upon her the bright world of poetry and romance ; he watched all this as the greedy alchymist might the materials in his crucible, that he meant his skill should turn to gold. The alchymist, as he looked on his promised treasure, loved it ; and so did Robert Wilson love his cousin. Beauty was plentiful around him, as the peach blossoms in his father's orchard ; but like the trashy fruit which fol-

lowed, had no flavour for his curious palate. Intellect, sentiment, and cultivation, were necessary for his enjoyment, and Emily should have them all.

A veil hung over the early years of his father, which he had long felt was impenetrable; and, to do him justice, he had little wish to lift it, at the risk of others getting a peep with him:—knowing that his father had various acquirements, which he willingly communicated to him, and that (for the country he had chosen) he was rich, perfectly sufficed him; he asked not to know more. Young Wilson was no contemptible modern linguist; at least he read and relished the wit and poetry of France and Italy. Music was born with him, and his father did little more than teach him its alphabet. On Emily he determined to confer all he had acquired, and most apt and docile did he find her.

The careful mother saw nothing but benefit in the lessons of her cousin, for they cost nothing; and if it happened that he fell in love with her, she could not wish a better match. Neither

did old Wilson see any danger in the intercourse. Emily Williams would be nearly portionless, but he knew his son too well to fear that he would marry her. The young girl learnt with great rapidity, and as her capacity was good, it would have been wonderful if she had not done so ; for her studies were rendered palatable by the rapid acquirement of all that is light and bright and enchanting in literature. Yet still her mind retained its purity. Young Wilson was too refined in taste to covet the possession of coarseness, and he had never spread a page before her which could corrupt her delicacy.

It was only a few weeks before the arrival of the English travellers, that Robert Wilson had first pressed her hand with the fervour of love, and permitted his eyes to speak the language of passion.

It is a sin to prate idly of Providence ; but let philosophers say what they will, there is a power that hovers around innocence, making the dove as wily as the serpent. This power

leaves us when purity of heart is gone, even though actual vice may yet be distant; and it is then that seduction does its work.

But Emily was not in a state of mind to be seduced to evil. No passion obscured her reason, no impurity had blunted the sensitive delicacy of her nature; that look of passion was not only painful, it was loathsome to her, and she turned from it in shuddering. But her assailer was nothing daunted: he saw she did not love him yet, but he was willing to wait.

He knew it was his aunt's wish that he should marry her, and as surely did he guess that his father was satisfied he never would. He had therefore no opposition to fear, and from that day he ceased not to besiege the heart of Emily, by seeking to awaken her passions, by soothing her taste, by enchanting her senses. All was in vain. She had spoken the truth when she said she hated him; and she shunned him by every device in her power. Yet still he felt no doubt of ultimate success; he thought he had frightened her by his abruptness, and

sought to accustom her by gentle degrees to the expression of his love.

From what has just been related, it may be seen that as yet he had made no progress. The certainty of passing a day without seeing him, made it one of jubilee to her, and it passed indeed most pleasantly both to her and Caroline. Dinner-time found them still unwearied, reading and talking alternately; the *tête-à-tête* was uninterrupted, for Mr. Gordon and his young friend, had spent the morning in a long ramble on the banks of the river.

During this ramble they had conversed much, and Lord Darcy returned home in a state of mind, infinitely less miserable than that in which he had left it.

The long letter too, which he, at length, had found courage to write to his mother, seemed to have removed a weight from his spirits, and it was almost gaily that he entered the drawing-room after changing the dress, which was "stained with the variations of each soil" found on the rugged banks of the Genessee.

Mr. Gordon had not yet finished his toilet, so it fell to Lord Darcy to relate all they had seen in their excursion. The relation was addressed to Miss Gordon, but it was now impossible for Lord Darcy not to see the face that looked towards him from the same sofa on which she sat. It was really the first time he had ever looked at Emily Williams, and it was with as much astonishment as admiration, that he remarked her exceeding beauty.

The occupation of the morning, so congenial to all her hoarded tastes and wishes, had awakened a degree of animation that gave perfection to her loveliness.

The dinner passed gaily, and Madame arrived before either of the party believed that the day had so nearly left them; but she was not a person to disturb the pleasures of society; wherever she went, she contributed her full share to the grace and the wit of conversation—excepting, perhaps, at Perfect Bliss, and there she soon found they valued any other species of contribution more highly. After coffee, Mr.

Gordon reminded his daughter that she had promised to be particularly musical herself, to atone for the caprice which had prevented his inviting Mr. Wilson.

"Caroline would not permit me to invite your cousin, Miss Williams, because she thought his extraordinary powers would prevent others from performing. I know not if there be many such voices in America, but I can assure you it is very rare to meet his equal, even among the professional performers of Europe."

"I have been so little in company, that I cannot say if many others sing like him, but I expect not."

"Do you sing, Miss Williams?"

"Yes, to be sure, papa," replied her friend; "so place the candles, open the piano, and let us begin, for then I know you will be happy."

Miss Gordon then took her station at the instrument, and astonished Emily by the brilliancy of her finger: she sang a duet with Lord Darcy, that might have found favour any where.

Madame de Clairville had not touched a piano since she left Paris, and had not thought to have done so, she said, till she returned to it; but Caroline urged it so kindly, that she could not refuse, and she gave them a rustic Swiss air, that called forth a general encore.

Caroline again placed herself at the instrument.

"And now, Emily, let me hear you. What shall I play for you?"

"I am afraid to sing to your accompaniment, it is too brilliant for me."

"It is hardly more so than your cousin's, I think, and not nearly so learned; but I vacate my place, dear, sit down, and accompany yourself."

"I much doubt if you will endure my playing, but I cannot sing without it."

Readily, though not without trepidation, Emily took her seat, and played a slow and simple symphony. It was a song long forgotten, but one which the elder Wilson had loved in early life, and which Mrs. Sheridan had sung

till her hearers forgot the difference between heaven and earth. But Mrs. Sheridan herself never gave it with greater effect than did the little American. Caroline was astonished; Mr. Gordon's eyes filled with tears, as the thrilling notes swelled upon his ear; Lord Darcy completely forgot that he was an exile and an outcast; and Madame de Clairville only regretted that the *charmante demoiselle* was not at Paris.

"Are we not fortunate to have found such a singing bird in the wilderness?" said Caroline.

"You have most extraordinary powers, Miss Williams, and the sweetness of your voice equals its compass. Who was your instructor?"

The poor girl blushed painfully as she replied, "Robert Wilson, sir."

"You do him honour, my dear young lady: I am afraid we have no music that you will like. We have met with nothing here, beyond the music of the day."

"I have a great deal of old English music at home, sir, if you would like to have it."

Mr. Gordon was delighted, and frankly accepted the offer.

Miss Williams's music was sent for, and the evening passed in the performance of many of those fine old songs which have been banished from the drawing-rooms of England for ever.

Caroline loved music, but was not so much devoted to it as to wish to pass the whole evening without conversation ; and Madame de Clairville, too, soon looked as if she wanted to talk : she amused her little hand by taking snuff, then changed her place for a seat nearer the fire, and finally, so completely withdrew herself from the instrument, that Caroline was obliged (not much against her will) to place herself beside her on the sofa, while Mr. Gordon indulged himself fully, in listening to the singing of Lord Darcy and Miss Williams. Madame de Clairville was exceedingly entertaining, yet from time to time, Caroline's beautiful head was turned towards the singers. Did any thing like jealousy arise within her ? No. She cordially kissed her young friend at parting, and thanked

her very sincerely for the pleasure she had given them all.

And how did the young Emily bear the great success which had attended this first exhibition of her powers before "judges?" For a moment she had been pleased by the effect her first song had produced, but it lasted no longer; another and a deeper feeling took possession of her. Lord Darcy looked at her, spoke to her, sung with her, and her fate was sealed for ever. Young as she was, no moment of her after life was ever "fancy free;" she seemed to feel that every look and tone that sank into her soul, would work her woe; the idea that he could ever return her love, did not for an instant beguile her. When he joined his voice to her's, she warbled on, conscious that she was breathing out her last accents of peace and joy. The evening ended, and Emily went home an altered being.

CHAPTER XX.

I see some sparkles of a better hope,
Which older days may happily bring forth.

SHAKSPEARE.

WEEKS rolled on, with little apparent variety, but yet they produced many changes. Lord Darcy received a letter from his mother, relating all the particulars of her unhappy expedition to Carbury. The tone of the letter was that of profound melancholy, yet to Lord Darcy it brought peace and gladness. He had a strong reliance on his mother's firmness and force of character; and he implicitly received her statement respecting the recovery of Dally. His heart thus relieved from the dreadful burden of believing himself guilty of the death of a fellow-

creature, every other evil seemed light. It was with delight little less than he would have felt at a public acquittal, that he announced his mother's tidings to Mr. Gordon and Caroline; both deeply sympathised in his rejoicing, but they felt more forcibly than he had yet leisure to do, all the misery which still surrounded him. Dally had escaped beyond the reach of pursuit, and Lady Darcy, who alone could offer testimony of his existence, was treated as a maniac even by her father.

"My dearest mother!" exclaimed Lord Darcy, "her sad situation is all that pains me now;—but I will write a letter that shall cheer her; and so will you, my friend, my benefactor: tell her that her testimony is enough for me, and that her Edward is himself again."

Poor Caroline! at the same moment that he showed every feeling, and every quality that could justify her love, she felt more than ever convinced that he did not return it. Had he been a little less fascinating in his recovered happiness, her conviction of his indifference

might have cured her; but not to love him a little longer now, was quite impossible. Besides—what had she to amuse her? She had fully intended to have taught Emily music, French, and Italian, and felt certain that this occupation would never have wearied her; but unfortunately she could not try the experiment, for she found the little trans-atlantic too far advanced to leave her much to do. It is true she had yet to learn how to display her accomplishments with the fullest effect, and Caroline was well qualified to instruct her. None knew better how to do their own honours than Miss Gordon; without pedantry, presumption, or conceit, she knew what she was, and what she could do; was always self-possessed, and therefore always graceful; no ill-humour disfigured, no shyness obscured, no affectation distorted her powers of pleasing.

She was certainly a charming creature; and so too was the dark-eyed little Emily. But nature had made them too essentially unlike, for the peculiar graces of the one, to be com-

municated to the other. Caroline felt this without reasoning much on the subject, and therefore changed the project of making her a pupil, but without losing any portion of the partial fondness she had inspired.

This was indeed fast ripening into affection and esteem. Madame de Clairville, too, continued both to interest and amuse her; yet still she had leisure left to be in love, though while she looked, and listened till her heart almost ached, she never forgot her resolution that she would not always love in vain; nay, in her very worst paroxysm of tender melancholy, she ceased not to feel a sort of latent consolation in the conviction that change of air, and London, would be able to cure her, in case of the worst.

The *beau monde* of Rochester continued their ponderous civilities, and Mr. Wilson continued his patronage; but neither Miss Gordon, nor Lord Darcy, obtained popularity among them.

Mr. Gordon pleased them better, however, for nothing could conquer the courtesy of his manner. His passion for music had led him

to show so much attention to the younger Wilson, that he was declared a very delightful man by the whole family. Emily had so far conquered her aversion, that she no longer refused to meet him, and it seemed that he had either abandoned his object, or changed his mode of attack; for he resumed his former manner towards her, and their evenings were spent almost constantly together at the house of Mr. Gordon. Madame de Clairville seldom failed to join the party, and the little set thus collected was so perfectly sufficient for the amusement of Mr. Gordon, and in many respects so agreeable to his daughter, that they could hardly be persuaded to break it up for the purpose of accepting invitations to eat ice and oysters in the starched drawing-rooms of Rochester. Mr. Gordon knew the world too well, not to be aware that they ran the risk of making many enemies by this exclusive way of amusing themselves; but when he had remonstrated with Caroline on the subject, he

had found her less disposed than usual to yield her will to his wish.

“ But, dear papa,” she argued, “ can it be a virtue to sit in a room where the men spit, and chew tobacco, and the women talk of nothing but ‘ *helps*,’ and the ‘ last sermon?’ ”

“ But it may be a virtue, Caroline, to endure a little inconvenience, rather than a great deal of ill will. I see, by the manner of several people, that they are offended by your refusing to go to their parties.”

“ If you could imagine, papa, the tenth part of what I suffer at one of those intolerably tedious, eating, drinking, spitting, questioning, canting, yawning meetings, I am very sure you would not ask me to bear it. And then we are so very comfortable at home now ; I confess, I think the reward of such martyrdom ought to be something more than the communion of the Rochester saints.”

Mr. Gordon lent no unwilling ear to these arguments in favour of doing what he liked,

and having satisfied his conscience, by pointing out to his thoughtless daughter the risk she ran, he quietly yielded to her sway, and with the exception of an occasional very good dinner to the Warners, Williamses and Wilsons, the little coterie above described continued to pass their evenings together, in most harmonious oblivion of all the inhabitants of the town.

It is possible that all the inhabitants of the town might in time have returned the compliment; and those "disgusting English people, with all their abominable airs," having been sufficiently criticised, and hated, would at length have been forgotten, had not attention been aroused, and curiosity again awakened, by the circumstances which will be related in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

A kind of godly jealousy (which I beseech you call a virtuous
sin),
Makes us afraid. SHAKESPEARE.

IN order to understand the causes which led to the disturbance of the quiet party above described, it will be necessary to return to Nixon Oglander, and explain the nature of his proceedings from the time he left Lady Darcy to the care of Mr. Allen, in the cottage of the widow Gardiner. The good woman had seen him, as before stated, run towards the cliff with all speed, and in less than half an hour afterwards, he had joined the party whose conversation his cousin had overheard in the cavern.

He knew the reputation of West's dogs, and had

no mind to encounter them; but knowing equally well the nature of their master, with whom he had repeatedly conversed on the subject of the money to be paid to his sister, he hit upon an ingenious expedient for obtaining admittance to him without danger.

By following exactly the instructions of Lady Darcy, he soon found himself on the roof of the cavern. He listened for a moment to ascertain if the party was still there, and satisfied himself that they were, and also that they were engaged in eating a meal, which had probably been prepared by the fire that betrayed their lurking place.

The smoke had ceased to ascend, but Oglander discovered the aperture without difficulty, and placing his head over it he pronounced clearly, but not loudly, the name of West. He instantly heard the clatter of arms, and the whispered consultation of the trio; but before it was over he called again, adding "Hist! hist! fear nothing," which produced an answer half surly, half confidential, of—

“ Who the devil are you ? ”

“ A friend, as you shall see ; ” and a heavy purse dropped through the opening upon the embers, like the black pudding of old.

It was not left to burn there ; and the voice of West answered to the pleasing summons as gently as such a voice could,

“ All’s right, friend ; I’ll be with you presently.”

And the next moment he swung himself up from the front of the cavern, followed by his enormous dog, who, however, stood behind him perfectly still, though with that look of watchful ferocity, that indicated a willing readiness to attack, the moment he should be ordered to do so.

“ West,” said Oglander, holding out his hand to him, “ there must be no more disguise between us,—we must plot together, and not apart ; our course is the same : aid me, and you shall be richly paid for it.”

“ You are free of hand, master,” answered West, “ that’s not to be denied ; and you may

be true of heart to a comrade,—but you are kin to him as I am foe to; and what proof besides your gold can you give that I may trust you?"

"This is no place for our talk, we may be heard from above; take me into the cavern with you, and I will give you reason for trusting me, by showing that it's my interest to be true."

West was just the man to feel the force of this argument, yet still he hesitated.

"Why, what do you fear, man? You have your dog, your friends below, and your arms beside;—now look at me:" and the lawyer opened his coat and waistcoat, so as to show that no arms could be concealed about him.

"I have no objection to hear what you may have to say, master; but I tell you beforehand, 'tis no safe tampering with me."

He laid himself down on the rock, and addressed his sister through the aperture: "Look out, Martha; lend the stranger a hand to come down."

Then springing to his feet, he said, "This way, sir,—mind your footing."

"Send the dog before you, and watch him, that he does not catch at me as I descend," said Oglander.

"I'll mind him; set your foot on that gray stone; now catch hold of the corner, and swing yourself round to the flat below;—that's it, master, now you may jump down; or, if you're afraid of the jar, hold by your hands, and get your feet on this morsel here, and you will slip easy."

Oglander descended safely, and followed West into the interior of the cavern, which immediately showed the purpose for which it was resorted to. Casks of various sizes were ranged along the sides, and a stifling smell of spirits pervaded the atmosphere. After proceeding about twenty yards, with no other light than what came from the entrance, they reached a chamber where the roof was much higher, and into which light streamed from several openings. Below the hole which served for a chimney, on

a small cask that supplied the want of a chair, sat Martha Dally: fragments of food, and a drinking-cup, lay on the top of a larger cask which stood before her, and on the opposite side of it was placed another, similar to the one she sat on, but no trace of any third person appeared.

"Now, sir, be seated," said West, "and let me know your pleasure. This is my sister; you may speak before her."

"And where is your nephew? my business is chiefly with him."

The brother and sister exchanged glances; and Oglander saw the woman turn her eyes, as if to give her brother a hint, towards a brace of pistols, which seemed placed most conveniently ready, at no great distance from her.

"My nephew?" said West, savagely; "don't you know as your's have murdered him?"

"West," replied Nixon Oglander, firmly, "you see I have trusted you; for I am here in your very den, alone, and unarmed; let us

at once understand one another, and then you will trust me."

He then unfolded to them enough of his purpose to convince them both that they had nothing to fear from him. He also gave them to understand, that unless they acted promptly and resolutely under his orders, nothing could prevent their being discovered, and immediately being brought to justice for their atrocious conspiracy. He related the discovery made by Lady Darcy, and told them that their only hope lay in her weakness, which he thought would, at least for some hours, prevent her taking any further steps for their being taken.

"Let me then see your son, good woman, without a moment's delay," continued the Sergeant, "and I will presently show him that it is his interest to do as I shall direct."

"And you must show that it is my interest too," growled West. "I can plot as well as you, master, though I am not the heir. I won't have been playing this hanging game for nothing. Sister there knows as 'twas I put it

into her head, to get the boy into my boat, and whisk him round the rock, and up here ; and I wasn't half a mile to sea, before the women came down to look after him. I knew I could make you all pay smart money, if we could but keep him for dead. I have done the work, and I'll have the pay, never doubt it."

"And never you doubt, my good fellow, that I count upon you as my sheet-anchor still. Let us understand one another at once, West. We are neither of us men to let grass grow under our feet, nor yet to have the hay plucked out of our mouths for want of giving a butt with our horns, or a kick with our heels. I was heir to my uncle before this insolent brat, who has insulted your nephew, was born ; and you have wit and spirit to help out your fishing and smuggling, or I am much mistaken in you. Not but a bold smuggler drives a good trade, and deserves to take his liquor like a gentleman ; nevertheless, I take it that fifty pounds down, and a hundred when the young pest is

past plaguing me, will be no bad pay for your share of the business?"

This neat and appropriate speech produced the expected effect. West only said, "Call the boy, Pat;" but it was clear to Nixon Oglander that the younger villain was within hearing, and ready to obey orders.

The woman rose to obey, and passed behind a jutting crag of rock that completely concealed her, but returned immediately, and before she had done her errand, to say, "And what shall I be the better for the bargain? I'm like to bide without my boy, for what I see, and gain nothing by it neither."

"Hold your shark's tongue," replied West; "who's to have the allowance from my lady?"

"And how long will she pay it after you've made away with the young lord?—and that's what your after, or I have not listened like a woman."

"Send the boy here, Pat," cried her brother, "or I'll blow you—"

"You will get naught by swearing, Bill. Let me go share and share with you in what he has offered, and I'll stand true to you both."

"Done, then," said her brother, "and waste no more time;" adding, as she disappeared, "she knows over much to be contradicted."

The moment after, she returned with her son. He looked pale, and as if weakened by loss of blood. Oglander was looking at his watch as he entered.

"My fine fellow," said he, "we must not waste time; you've not been such a dolt, I'll engage, as not to have heard all we have said."

Richard nodded his head.

"Now listen then to the rest: you must be off to Bridport to-night; it will not be the first you have spent at sea. You must take passage on board the first ship that sails for America, for New York, if possible. When there you must wait for further orders, and as you obey them, so shall you be paid?"

"And what will you give me at starting, master? I don't do dirty work for nothing."

"You shall be satisfied, Dick; but before I do all I intend for you, I must know that you are in earnest; remember, I shall know all,—and that by more ways than one, I promise you."

"What do you expect of me, then?—speak out."

For one short moment Nixon Oglander faltered; not in his purpose, but in the avowal of it.

"Speak out, man," repeated West, with a sneer; and the tone of swaggering equality with which this was uttered, gave a sharper pang to the last lingering feelings of the gentleman, than any his worn-out conscience could feel. He mastered it, however; nay, he smiled as he answered,—

"Dally, I want to see young Darcy laid as low as he intended to lay you."

"For that," said the young man, sulkily, "I don't believe he wished to kill me; but it's no

matter, I owe him a grudge—I want money, and I've made Carbury too hot to hold me;—so I'll do your work, if you'll pay high enough."

The Sergeant's pocket-book had been well supplied by his unfortunate cousin, and the perfect villain scrupled not to employ the money she had given to assist his search after Dally, in bribing him to withdraw himself for ever.

"And what if the young lord sees him, master?" said West, "where will be our pensions, and our payments then?"

Oglander laughed at his fear.

"You see what his mother has got by discovering him here—I have managed to make it of no more avail than if she had seen a will-of-the-wisp. No, no, West; we will have no more in the secret than is needful. I must have the boy watched; Dick, there, is the best man to watch him, for he has done it before."

"Agreed," said young Dally, pocketing the money he had received, "I will undertake to look after him, though his mother and the devil plotted together to prevent me."

Oglander having settled the manner of their correspondence, and made him understand that he should receive full orders, and regular remittances, was hastening from the cavern, when young Dally stopped him.

“I say, master, after all that's done and said, I don't start without my girl; I means to marry her, and lead an honest life, now that I have hired myself to such a noble gentleman.”

It was in vain that his mother and his uncle seconded the declaration of Oglander, that the thing was impossible; Dick was resolute, and forced them at length to yield to his will, by swearing, that come what would, he would not stir from Carbury without the girl; adding, “You may as well believe me first as last—mother knows me.”

The mother, who did indeed know her hopeful son, advised the Sergeant not to cross him, as he would have them all in jail before to-morrow, for a farthing.

Thus powerfully urged, Oglander promised that his wish should be complied with; but

many minutes more were employed in discussing the best method of getting at poor Susan, without attracting attention.

At last, every other plan being dismissed as impracticable, the Sergeant himself consented to lead her, when it was dark, to the foot of the rock below, where they were to have the boat ready to start. Having made this promise, he hastened away, his purpose confirmed by a parting assurance from his ally, that if he failed to bring Susan, their bargain was at an end, and he would visit her himself in broad daylight.

It was after this scene, that Sergeant Oglan-der returned to Carbury hotel, and wrote the kind and touching letter to his uncle, which brought him to the bed-side of Lady Darcy. This done, his next object was to see the basket-girl, and contrive to communicate to her, in private, the strange news he had to impart. She had been prevented taking her customary pilgrimage along the shore, on the morning of that eventful day, by the illness of her baby;

and when the lawyer inquired for her at the cottage where she lodged, under pretence of wanting some baskets, he found her looking miserably ill herself, rocking her wailing babe, beside the fire of her hostess. It seemed a difficult matter to speak to her alone; the woman of the house was engaged in washing in one corner, and two children, quite old enough to be dangerous listeners, were at play in another.

“How very ill you look, my poor girl,” began the pitying lawyer; “what ails you, and your child?”

“Want, and woe,” said the old woman at the washing-tub; “and ’tis a pity, if you and madam are come down to atone for the mischief that has been done here, that you don’t turn your thoughts to the child of him as was murdered, and to her that’s all one as his widow.”

Nixon Oglander was aware that his person was by this time pretty generally known in the village, but he had never before been so openly addressed upon the subject of his visit to Car-

bury. He had, however, the happy faculty of being always ready with a suitable, and, generally, with an amiable reply to whatever was said to him.

"You say right, my good woman, and my real purpose in visiting your cottage is to relieve the distress of this poor widow, as far as my money can do it; but she seems too low and weak for me to consult with her, as to the best mode of providing for the child, and I hope to leave this place almost immediately:—I wish you would go to the hotel, and give this card to Mrs. Cox, the landlady; she will give you food and wine to bring for her, and after a good meal she will be better able to talk with me."

As he spoke he wrote, with his pencil, an order for the things he mentioned.

"God bless you, sir," said the woman, as she wiped the suds from her arms, "a nourishing meal is what she has long wanted."

To take her bonnet from its peg, her shawl from a chair, and to substitute a dry apron for her wet one, took but a minute; two more

sufficed to send the two children scampering off to the village "ruination shop," with a sixpence in each happy hand; and Sergeant Oglander was left alone with Susan. He looked at the poor, pale, trembling creature, and the pulsation of his heart seemed to stop for a moment, as he remembered how much more than life it was, which he was going to entrust to her strength.

The experience of a practised villain through thirty years of iniquity, had stamped upon his mind a feeling of distrust of his fellow-men, which prevented his ever putting confidence in them, without having the hostage of their own safety in his hands; but Nixon Oglander, in common with all men who have studied the human heart, knew that neither sorrow, poverty, nor even vice itself, could corrupt the integrity of a woman's affections.

He knew she loved Dally, for he had listened to her, and looked at her, as she told the story of his death, and if she loved, he knew she might be trusted—for she was a woman, and the secret

involved the fate of her lover. It was fear, rather than pity which taught him caution, as he communicated to her the unlooked-for tidings; but not all the skill of his crescendo movement, as he approached the truth, could prevent the overpowering effect of the joyful surprise. Her first instinctive movement was to lay her baby on the floor, for she felt she could not hold it; and then sinking on her knees by its side, she laughed and cried hysterically, as she bent over it, and at length lay down beside it, apparently insensible, but catching her breath at intervals, with a short sob, which showed that animation was not totally suspended. Not all the self-possession of Oglander could prevent his trembling with agitation, as he sought around the room for cold water, and having found it, and raised her in his arms, saw that she was perfectly incapable of understanding what he said to her. No tender mother ever watched her infant, struggling between life and death, with more breath-

less anxiety than he now looked for returning intelligence in her wild and tearful eye.

“Susan! Susan! recollect yourself, or you will again destroy him!” but Susan shrunk from him with a look of doubt and perplexity, that plainly indicated a confusion of intellect. Now it was plain his only safety lay in her comprehending fully, and clearly, all he had to say to her. Should her recollection return in the presence of a third person, he was lost. The extremity of his danger suggested a horrible mode of escape from it.

“I might silence her for ever,” he thought, “by only pressing that bundle of rags upon her mouth——”

While the idea entered like burning iron into his soul, the baby uttered a plaintive cry, which went straight to the mother’s heart, and recalled her wandering senses.

As she raised it in her arms, and prepared to give it the nourishment, which, till want had checked its genial flow, had proved a panacea

to all its little sorrows, her countenance recovered its natural expression, and she exclaimed, in a voice low from weakness, but perfectly collected in manner—

“ Oh, sir, what was it I fancied you had said to me ?”

“ Nothing but what I did say, my good girl ; take this cup of water, you shall have wine presently, but remember, that if you breathe a word of Richard Dally’s being hid in the cave, where they keep their smuggled goods you know, he will be hanged, as sure as you sit there, for having cheated the coroner.”

The girl again looked wildly at him—

“ I tell ! I get him hanged !—where is he ? let me go to him,—I must go to him this instant.”

“ Susan, mind what I say to you—the woman of the house will be here in a moment ; tell her you are frightened about your baby ; eat and drink what I give you, and no more ; and when I ask if you will bring your baskets to my sister, say, Yes, and go out with me, and I will take

you where you will see Dally, and stay with him, if you wish it."

She now listened to him with great attention, while he told her it was necessary for Richard to go abroad, to save himself from being punished for the fraud he had practised; and that he wished to take her with him, and to marry her. Her sad eye brightened as she listened to him, but before she could answer, the woman returned from the hotel, with a basket carefully packed by the obsequious landlady. With an air of fatherly kindness the Sergeant unpacked the provisions.

"Indeed, it is time this poor girl should take something—she is frightened about her baby, but a little of this good wine will set all right."

And so saying, he poured a prudent quantity into a tea-cup, and made Susan swallow it. As she set the cup down, he fixed his eyes with meaning on her face, and said—

"Do you feel yourself *stronger*, Susan?"

She understood him, and answered firmly, "Yes, sir."

Reassured by her manner, he proceeded, composedly, and with an air of much kindness, to set some cold meat before her, and then, with amiable affability, he told the woman of the house, that she, too, ought to be hungry after her walk.

He watched the poor starving girl eat with careful caution, and when he thought fit to stop her, he said—

“Now, Susan, go to your own little room, and make yourself and your baby ready to go to the lady at the hotel, and you will find her a kind friend.”

As he spoke, he again fixed his eyes on her, with a look she understood, and she showed him she did, by a nod of the head, which preceded the respectful “yes, sir,” with which she left the room.

While she made her hasty preparations for departure, Nixon Oglander conversed with her hostess in such a manner as to impress her with a high idea of his goodness and benevolence. He lamented the untimely fate of the young

husband, as he called him, and said, nothing that the Darcy family could do should be left undone, to console those he was taken from! Before Susan returned, the poor woman would have willingly sworn before any court in Christendom, that Sergeant Oglander, to her certain knowledge, was the best, and the kindest man that ever walked on shoe-leather.

The light of a September evening was declining fast, when he left the cottage with Susan and her baby. Having walked some yards on the way towards the hotel, which immediately placed them out of sight of the cottage they had left, he told his agitated companion to proceed to the beach without him, that they might not be seen together, and to wait for him at the spot where he had first seen her, promising to join her as soon as the darkness was sufficiently advanced to permit his doing so safely.

Having dismissed her, he returned alone to the hotel, made the tenderest inquiries for Lady Darcy, regretted that the necessity of keeping her quiet must prevent his having the

melancholy satisfaction of entering her room, and having taken a cup of coffee, he set off again to finish the important business he had in hand. By this time it was quite dark; but before he joined the trembling girl, who was waiting for him under the cliff, he called again at the cottage from which he had led her.

"Is poor Susan returned?" said he to the woman of the house, as he entered.

"Dear! no, sir; isn't she with the lady?"

"The lady has been taken ill, and is in her bed; but surely she would not have seen her, had she been well. A strange thing has happened since we left you: you must have known all, my good woman; but I will not blame you, for 'twas your kind heart, doubtless, that made you hide the truth. As we went, I spoke to her of her husband, and to my sorrow and surprise, she told me that she had never been married. Wicked as she is, I would have spared her if I could; but I was so shocked at the idea of taking a girl of that sort to Lady Darcy, that I told her to begone, and never

again dare to show herself before a lady of honour. The poor creature turned from me, and I went home, angry with her, and with myself too, for not having known more about the matter before I thought of taking her to the lady. When I got to the hotel, I found Lady Darcy ill in bed; and sitting down by myself, I began to think I had been too hard upon the girl, and thought I'd come and see after her."

"God help her, poor soul!" cried the woman, "I don't defend the wrong she's done; but she's sorely to be pitied."

"And I like you the better for thinking so, though I was so angry myself when I first found out the truth," said the Sergeant, giving her a crown. "Tell her when she comes home that she shall be cared for, and her child too, but that she should not think of going before such a person as Lady Darcy."

So saying, he again left the woman impressed with the highest admiration of his surpassing virtue and kindness. He then hastened

to the beach, and there, at the place appointed, he found poor Susan.

She did not confess to him how much she had suffered in the interval, from the fear that he might have deceived her, but gladly obeyed his request not to speak, lest they should be overheard. In haste and silence, they pursued their way close under the cliff, the faint star-light being hardly sufficient to guide them through the rocks, which at many points were scattered over the shore. Oglander stalked on before with unfeeling speed, provoked at the danger to which he was exposed by the obstinate wilfulness of Dally; and poor Susan followed him, her heart beating, and her limbs trembling with hope, fear, agitation and fatigue. At length they reached the spot from whence West had told him his signal could be heard at the cavern. He whistled sharp and shrill through his fingers, as had been agreed upon, and was instantly answered by three notes upon a whistle, which poor Susan instantly knew, and sunk insensible upon the ground.

In less than five minutes Richard Dally supported her in his arms, and the caresses he lavished on her, and on the child, might have touched any heart less coldly hard than that of Nixon Oglander.

He stopped their raptures, by telling Dally, that if he were too great a fool to do the business intrusted to him, he was not such an idiot as to pay him. A considerable portion of the sum he had agreed to give the young man was yet unpaid, and the recollection of this sufficed to recall Richard to the necessity of prompt exertion. Oglander inquired if they had been employed, according to agreement, in concealing every vestige of the existence of their retreat; adding, that he should reconnoitre it on the morrow, and that if he found any reason to be dissatisfied, the stipend he had engaged to pay would never be forwarded. Dally assured him that they had not been idle; that the boat was ready to start, as he might see by going down to the place where it lay moored; and that nothing remained

to be done above, but to close up with fragments of rock, faggots, and brush-wood, which they had ready at hand, the one small opening they had left. The lawyer then prepared to take his leave, telling them both, by way of farewell, that they were entirely at his mercy, but that it was totally out of their power to prove any thing against him.

“Remember this,” he concluded; “be faithful, active, and intelligent, and you shall be rich beyond your hopes.”

So saying, he turned away, and retraced his steps to the hotel.

From this moment he had never had any farther intercourse with West or his sister. They well knew that they could not betray his share in the villainy that had been practised, without implicating themselves; and as he had taken care to persuade them that the crime they had committed before they had seen him, was one which would forfeit their lives, he had little to fear from their treachery.

So completely did he contrive to delude his

uncle, that they left Carbury together on a more cordial footing of friendship than ever; and the dreadful imputations thrown upon him by Lady Darcy seemed to her father to demand, as an atonement, all the favour and affection that it was possible for him to show. Thus more than ever assured of the ultimate success of his villainy, he only waited for the letters his uncle was expecting from America, to forward his final orders to his agent.

Till these arrived, he knew not where the wanderers were to be found; but the interval was not altogether wasted. Statements appeared in all the papers of the murder of Dally. Some of these affected to conceal the name of the noble culprit; in others, the initials of his name and titles were given; others again immediately followed the paragraph relating the murder, by another, apparently unconnected with it, giving an extract from the peerage, of the age, name, titles, and property of the Earl of Darcy. In a word, he took such effectual measures to make the story public, that before

the end of a month it was known and talked of throughout the kingdom. Nor did his prescience stop here: with precautions for concealment, which many preceding adventures had made familiar to him, he caused a letter to be dispatched to one of the most intelligent of the New York police, containing a description of Lord Darcy's person, with orders to discover, and not lose sight of him, but not to let him or his party perceive the surveillance.

It was this letter which first caused the short-lived tranquillity of the exiles to be disturbed.

CHAPTER XXII.

With what a sharp provided wit he reasons!—SHAKSPEARE.

MR. HANNIBAL BURNS was one of the editors of a New York "semi-weekly" paper; and, moreover, an officer of the police. The latter occupation he had been "raised to:" that of newspaper editor, or, as it is familiarly termed, "Slang Wanger," was a dignity but lately fallen upon him.

As he had found his first calling not only profitable, but peculiarly suited to his temper and talents, he never suffered the other to interfere with it; such, indeed, is the general versatility of faculties and acquirements in the New World, that many of its citizens follow

three or four professions at once ; therefore Mr. Hannibal Burns must not be considered as being at all out of the usual routine, in joining these two avocations together. At the time the English travellers met him at the farm of his brother, he was on his way to Buffalo, to which place he had tracked a German Jew, who had robbed a silversmith's shop in London. It was upon the detection, and apprehension of these foreign delinquents that he especially gloried in displaying his acute sagacity ; and so ably had he exerted himself in this particular branch of his profession, that he was almost as well known in London and Paris, as Townsend and Vidoque themselves.

No sooner was it known in either of these cities, that a criminal had taken flight, than orders were dispatched to Mr. Burns to be on the alert ; in fact, he had become so accustomed to this business, that he seldom saw a foreigner without feeling that he ought to have something to do with him.

The unusual circumstances attending Mr.

Gordon's entrance into his brother's house, the evident melancholy of Lord Darcy, and the no less evident wealth of the party, immediately suggested to Mr. Hannibal, the ideas of crime, flight, and concealment.

He little doubted, but that on his arrival at New York, he should find letters from some of his correspondents describing the party, offering rewards, and so on.

It was to assist himself in proving their identity, that he had shorn the sable curl from the head of Lord Darcy, and also made sundry memoranda, measurement of shoes, hats, and the like, to assist him.

The event justified his sagacity. On his return to New York, he found the narrative of the Carbury tragedy in several English papers; and better still, he found a letter to himself containing a handsome retaining fee, and a most accurate description of the remarkable-looking young man he had seen at his brother's farm on his way to Buffalo.

His pursuit of the flying Israelite had led

him far, and detained him long, and he did not get this letter till six weeks after the time he had seen Lord Darcy.

He had heard enough to know that the party were proceeding to Rochester, and thither he immediately repaired. He would have found no difficulty in ascertaining that the person he sought for was still there, had not his instructions particularly specified that his inquiries should be made with as little appearance of professional interest as possible.

It so happened, however, that the person and calling of Mr. Hannibal Burns were well known by many at Rochester, and, among others, by a certain devout grocer of the name of Mitchel, who, upon some occasion or other, had had a little business with him.

As Mr. Mitchel was a bachelor, and moreover a very sober man, Mr. Burns thought he could nowhere address himself to obtain the information he wanted, with less danger of having the conversation repeated.

Unfortunately he did not know that Mr.

Mitchel was a thorough-bred New England Yankee, or he might have been aware that in colloquy, with even a New York police officer, he would probably contrive to obtain more information than he gave. Ignorant of this important fact, he proceeded to the store of his acquaintance, whom he found standing behind his counter with his hat on, and a newspaper in his hand.

“ So, Mr. Mitchel, how are you, sir ? kedge, and hearty, I hope ? ”

“ No great matter to complain of, touching my bodily health, Mr. Burns ; but these are awful times, sir. Why, what a dissolute, prayerless place New York must be grown into ! Here’s a paper that has been loaned me, and half of it is filled with a history of stage plays, and masquerading balls.”

“ We follow up Paris and London considerable near, Mr. Mitchel, that’s a fact ; but yet we have many associational parties that solemnize the place, which I am partly sure you would approbate, sir. And how does

Rochester progress, Mr. Mitchel? Have you got many strangers come recent?"

The little Yankee immediately "realized," that Mr. Burns was on the look out.

"Our houses here are improved as fast as they are built, I guess; I never hear of any as lay long vacant."

"Possible? and the streets spreading so fast! but I mean in the line of transient people, and foreigners. I know the English contrive it, as far as Niagara, even; they are curious great travellers."

"I expect so."

"Have you heard lately of any arrivals in that way?"

"I never fellowship greatly with travellers."

"You hav'n't heard of any as conducts rather particular, have you, sir?"

"Are you looking after some, Mr. Burns?"

"If I was, you may allot that I would not deputize another to find them out; but you know in my line of slang-wanging, we love to toll about a little news. Somebody told me,

as there was some curious rich English folks as had come this road !”

“ So much the better for the taverns, Mr. Burns, 'specially if there is women with 'em, for their women make no requirement to know the price of a thing,—when they want it, they'll have it.”

“ I expect these folks have a young woman with 'em, so probable you have remarked her, as they say she's mighty sightly.”

“ We count it derogatory in a fiducial Christian, to be looking too close after the female kind. For my share, if I make a bestowment of my attention upon strangers, it is more on the man kind, than the female.”

“ 'Twould be great nonsense in you, surely, to watch a tumperry girl hither and yon. But have you marked any European strangers biding here of late ?”

“ Are they young or old, those as you have heard about ?”

“ I guess as they said there was a young man with them.”

"Fair complexion had he? and light blue eyes?"

"If my retrospect of what I heard is correct, he is quite the reverse—unless, indeed, he has got a wig."

"Like enough, flaxen hair is a great disguise to a swarthy face."

"No, no, the face isn't swarthy either; clear and pale—without any colour, but no way swarthy."

"Surely? well I expect if they have travelled through long since. . . . How long ago was it?"

"Why, if I don't oblivate what I heard, it might be about six weeks ago."

"I am partly certain, Mr. Burns, that no two like that, has been seen here by themselves."

"Not altogether so, sir; I expect there was a tall man, as the girl called her father."

"And that makes three. No, nothing of the kind, I am pretty sure."

"I reckon they had two men with them, by way of domestics, I expect."

"Well, Mr. Burns, I can make a publishment to my friends, if it will be any obligation to you, that you are upon the look out for a rich gentleman and his daughter, with two male domestics, and a young man of clear, pale complexion, with black eyes and hair. I can realize your description considerable; but for my own share, I cannot report as I know any thing particular about them."

The discomfited Mr. Burns turned sulkily from the store; while the triumphant Yankee rubbed his hands, and thanked the Lord that he was not like other men, to let out his secrets in that fashion.

Now it happened that Mr. Mitchel was known to have made money, and was considered as a man of very good standing throughout the town; but nowhere was he held in higher estimation, than among the ladies at Mrs. Bevan's.

Miss Duncomb, in particular, considered him quite as one of the lights in her path ; indeed, it is highly probable, that if that lady had possessed five thousand, instead of only three thousand dollars, she might have become Mrs. Mitchel. At any rate, Mr. Mitchel felt a very great esteem for her, which she certainly returned with interest.

They had been for four years members of the same church, had attended the same class-meetings, were both of them equally distinguished by their class-leader, both of them had a high reputation for being prayerfully disposed, and both had the faculty of remembering a sermon from the text to the "*improvement*," with more fidelity than any other Christians in Rochester. It is not very strange, that to so many points of sympathy they should join one more : they both equally delighted in a little scandal. Never did the faithful grocer hear of failing credit, or of a frail fair one ; of a saint caught napping, or of a sinner brought to shame ; but he "devolved" for a time his business on

his clerk, and set forth to pay a visit to the ladies."

Mr. Mitchel had not himself been among the visiting acquaintance of Mr. Gordon, but he had heard enough of them, to know that his strong suspicion of their being followed by the police of New York, would not be unfavourably received by his fair friends.

It was not, therefore, many hours after Mr. Burns had left him, that he entered Mrs. Bevan's parlour, his long narrow face sharpened with the consciousness of his important tidings. When the character of a neighbour was the problem, Mr. Mitchel was apt to reason like a woman, and jump to the conclusion. He cheered the hearts of all the ladies, and Mrs. Williams was one of them, with the broad assertion, that the iniquity of those who had scorned their betters was brought to light; and that in the Lord's good time, they would be punished for their misdeeds; for that to his certain knowledge, the officers of justice were after Mr. Gordon, &c. &c. &c.

It is hardly necessary to trouble the reader with a detailed account of the horror expressed, or the pleasure felt, on this occasion.

"I thought so!"

"I was very sure how it would be!"

"I said it would issue in mischief."

"I am not one bit surprised."

"I saw it clearly from the first," and

"The Lord be good unto me! what will brother Wilson say?" formed the chorus with which the news was received.

Mr. Mitchel shook his head, as the ladies purred around him, and almost squeezed the hand of Miss Duncomb, in the sympathy he felt for her detestation of such wickedness.

"It is perfectly astonishing," observed Mrs. Cornish, "how often my prognostics have been right, respecting English people. When I lived in New York, it was quite impossible, even in the elevated circle in which we moved, not to fall in occasionally with some of these wretched, unfashionable, disreputable, people;

but I always put Mr. Cornish on his guard against them."

"Indeed, mamma," said Miss Maria, arranging her "spit curl" in that particular manner which at once explains the meaning of the rather particular appellation given by American ladies to the little captivating lock which adorns their temples, "Indeed, mamma, they are not always so very low. I remember hearing that there was a lord came over once; I am sure, I wish I had been grown up then!"

"I don't see," said Mrs. Oaks, "why I should not go over just now, when that insolent Miss is pulled down a little, and look about after my elegant things. It is the bounden duty of every body in this life to look after the things that are trusted to their keeping. It is not nowise impossible but she may say something more about the book-shelves—or, frightened as she is, I should not be surprised if she thought it would be as well to pay me the compliment of leaving the pianoforte behind her. I wish

Mrs. Bevan, or you Miss Duncomb, or both of you, ladies, would just step over with me this very minute."

Both ladies instantly declared their willingness, and Mr. Mitchel professed himself much pleased that he had been the means, in the hands of Providence, of being serviceable in so good a cause.

The three ladies hastened to bonnet and cloak themselves, and leaving Mr. Mitchel to await the news they might bring with them at their return, they walked off with the firm step of virtuous indignation, to see how poor Caroline bore her "pulling down."

But the pulling down had not yet reached her. She was sitting, as was now pretty generally her custom in the morning, tête à tête with her friend Emily. Miss Gordon was drawing, while Emily read to her; and at the moment the three ladies were announced, they were laughing very heartily at the scene between king Richard and the friar, while at supper in the holy cell of the forest anchorite.

There is always something embarrassing in the abrupt check given to laughter, by the unexpected entrance of a person, or persons, totally unfit to join in it. It is like a sudden stop put to violent motion. If this be true in ordinary cases, much more was it so in the present instance; for there was that in the manner and aspect of the visitors, which must have banished the smile from the cheek of Hebe herself.

Mrs. Oaks entered first—as she had a right to do, seeing that the house was her own. Her countenance, which was naturally sharp, now bore a sort of vinegar expression, mingled with defiance. Her arms were firmly fixed to her sides, and her hands tightly clasped together. Miss Duncomb followed, with her dark eyebrows knit into an awful frown. She intended that her countenance should express the virtue and holiness of all the saints and martyrs; but there was a little crabbed air of earthly spite in her features, that quite overpowered the celestial expression she aimed at. Mrs. Bevan,

as usual, humbly entered last. Not even the business she was upon could conquer her habitual smoothness; but she showed the interest she took in it, by muttering to herself every step she went, "Dear me!—Mercy on us!—Oh dear! oh dear!"

Miss Gordon half rose from her chair, and uttered a civil salutation, which was received in perfect silence, except the muttered, "Oh dear! oh dear!" of Mrs. Bevan. The servant had placed chairs, and they sat down. Emily closed her book, and turning her sweet eyes on Miss Duncomb, said—

"Have you seen mamma to-day, Miss Duncomb?"

"Go home to your mother's house this instant, Emily Williams, and try to atone for all the idle hours you have wasted. The daughter of a Christian woman like your mother, would be better on her knees at home, than sitting in such company, and hooting and laughing that fashion."

The grisly devotion, and sour morality of

Miss Duncomb, were pretty generally known throughout Rochester, and neither Miss Gordon, nor Emily could have been surprised by any ordinary expression of ill-humour; but there was something in her present address that they were quite unable to understand. They involuntarily looked at each other, and after a moment's pause, Miss Gordon said—

“ Has Miss Williams been sent for by her mother, ma'am ? ”

Miss Duncomb turned her head aside to avoid looking at her, as she replied—

“ I come on no one's message, ma'am, and I wait for no one's commands, when the Lord's work is to be done. Go, Emily Williams, and be thankful to the Lord that you have friends to look after you.”

“ Elle est folle, ma chère,” said Caroline, “ ne vous effrayez pas. Montez à ma chambre, quand elle sera partie, je viendrai vous chercher.”

Emily rose, and followed the advice of her friend, much surprised, and a good deal alarmed at Miss Duncomb's extraordinary address, but

not at all inclined to receive it with the implicit obedience she seemed to expect.

Miss Duncomb did not understand a word of French, and was sorely provoked to see "a member of the same congregation" walk off, as she greatly feared, in defiance of her. Miss Gordon's perfect composure of manner puzzled all the ladies exceedingly, and a minute elapsed before either of them could decide what they had best say next; but Mrs. Oaks, who was the only one that expected actual solid profit from the business, rallied her faculties, and said—

"I expect, Miss Gordon, if you go off in a hurry, as seems nowise impossible, that you will remember that you have been accommodated with one of the most elegant places in the town, and that without word asked, what or who you were, nor where you come from. I think my accommodation should not be forgotten in my turn, and that any odd things as you may have brought into the house should be left, to make up for all the ill-words, I may come

by, for being so over confiding to strangers." And as she spoke she had the courage to fix her eyes very particularly on the pianoforte.

Miss Gordon stared at her with most unfeigned astonishment, and then turned to examine the countenances of her companions. The almost ferocious solemnity of Miss Duncomb's face, as well the downcast eyes, and pursed up mouth of Mrs. Bevan, convinced her that there was something going forward that she did not understand, and she determined on making an effort to obtain an explanation.

"I am always extremely happy, ladies, to receive a visit from you—but, will you permit me to ask, if you have any particular reason for calling this morning?"

The three looked at each other, and evidently began to wish themselves home again. They had supposed it certain, from Mr. Mitchel's statement, of the arrival of "the police," that the parties concerned must have been made acquainted with it, and that they should have had an opportunity of seeing "if the English

girl would dare to look them in the face after being found out." But she did look them in the face, with such an air of unconsciousness and surprise, that there was no doubting the fact of her ignorance; her innocence was quite another affair.

Mrs. Bevan's *in-grain* civility forced her to answer the young lady's question, as no one else seemed inclined to do it, and looking first at one, and then at the other of her companions, as if to ask their leave for what she was doing, she said—

"Dear me, ma'am, nothing at all."

Though this was not particularly satisfactory, it was difficult to insist upon any thing more. Miss Gordon bowed and was silent.

"It is best, ma'am, that Emily Williams should bide with her mother," said Miss Duncomb, rising to go, "and if you don't know any reasons why, it is likely that in the Lord's good time you may."

So saying, she departed, followed by the others. Mrs. Oaks, however, pausing to say,

"I hope, Miss Gordon, ma'am, that you will remember my obligingness:" and poor Mrs. Bevan, waiting till the other two were out of sight, turned round, and made a very respectful courtesy.

No sooner was the house-door closed upon them, than the tongues which had been paralyzed in the presence of Miss Gordon, began to recover their powers.

"It's a right-down shame in Mr. Mitchel," said Mrs. Oaks, "to send people off on a fool's errand this way—that the Gordons deserve to be hanged is all very likely, and it may come to pass too, for all that I know or care; but it's plain as the sun, that the girl knows nothing about it as yet; and I make no manner of doubt I shall find half a dozen stitches dropped in my stocking, bolting out as I did in such a hurry."

"It is no fault of Mr. Mitchel's, Mrs. Oaks, that you did not act with the decent slowness of a Christian, in putting your stocking in your bag, and I'm free to think that there was more view to earthly gain than to religious edification, in the hurry you was in to go."

(Mrs. Oaks was *not* of the same congregation.)

"Dear me! dear me! what a sad business 'tis, to be sure, to see that dear sweet girl of good Mrs. Williams's set up so by that gally-vaunting miss. Did you ever see, Mrs. Oaks, such lace as she got on her collar, and such a gown too! really, 'tis hardly fitting, to my mind, that any body should wear such clothes every day, 'tis all very well for a Sunday, or walking in Broadway, at New York; but to sit at home, just painting that way, is altogether quite unprincipled extravagance. However, I do wish Mr. Mitchel hadn't sent us off so, just for nothing."

"Mr. Mitchel's words will come true yet, ladies, and then say I told you so," said Miss Duncomb. "And I must say you would show yourselves better Christians if you trusted to the words of a godly man like him, instead of being startled and terrified by the airs and finery of such a creature as that we have been looking at."

Having again reached Mrs. Bevan's parlour, they found Mr. Mitchel and Mrs. Cornish eagerly waiting for their report of the visit. Neither of the three ladies were in very good humour, but it was Mrs. Oaks who undertook to revenge their disappointment by scolding Mr. Mitchel most heartily.

"I really do wonder, Mr. Mitchel, how a man in business can find time to run about the town, trumping up such stories, for nothing on earth but to make people stare, and set some, who have better things to mind, running like so many sheep through a hedge, to find out the truth."

Mr. Mitchel fired immediately.

"I tell you what, Mrs. Oaks, ma'am, I'll wager a tea-drinking in my keeping-room to all the ladies, against a tea-drinking given by you, in Mrs. Bevan's parlour here, to the same agreeable party, that every word I have told you this blessed morning will prove true. I neither trump up stories, Mrs. Oaks, nor yet run about the town : I live on the best, and earn what I

spend. I have been in business these thirty years, and never was bankrupt but twice; and I leave the company to judge if I am likely to waste my time that way."

Though the appeal was made to the company, the gentleman plainly addressed himself to Miss Duncomb, "his air, and all his manner showed it," and on her part she seemed perfectly ready to "own the soft impeachment," for she instantly re-echoed every word he said, adding as her own commentary, that there was not in the whole State of New York a gentleman less likely to propagate scandal than Mr. Mitchel.

Touched to the core by such praise, from such lips, Mr. Mitchel softened again into confidential chat; but just as he was coming to the pith and marrow of his discourse, and appeared to be on the very verge of telling them *how* he had gained his intelligence, the black help entered, and said, "Come along, Mrs. Bevan, and dress the salad." Mr. Mitchel rose politely, and stretched out his hand for his hat, which he had placed under his chair, but Mrs. Bevan felt

that, even putting Miss Duncomb out of the question, the finest turkey that she could set upon the table would oblige her boarders less than she had now the opportunity of doing, by inviting Mr. Mitchel to "stay dinner."

"Don't think of going just now, Mr. Mitchel," and she looked round with the rare assurance of meeting universal approbation.

"Thank ye, madam, you're always very polite, Mrs. Bevan, and I've no objection in life to eat my dinner with the ladies."

So saying, he replaced his hat on the floor, and again addressed himself to the listening circle.

"Well now," said Mrs. Bevan, "I must neglect my business for once, I expect.—Let Peggy cook, dress the salad," ~~summed the~~ lady from the parlour door, and then returning to her place, she again made one of the eager group of listeners.

But Mr. Mitchel was again interrupted by the entrance of Madame de Clairville. He was instantly silent, for it was well understood by

the whole party that it would in no way be prudent to pursue the subject in so very confidential a manner in her presence.

The ladies bore this the better, from knowing that she always left the dining-room the moment the cloth was withdrawn, and moreover, that gentlemen never talked at dinner; so the bean soup, and the fried chickens, and the beef steaks, were dispatched with rather more than usual celerity: Madame de Clairville made her exit; Mrs. Cornish had her bottle of wine; Mrs. Oaks her mouthful of brandy; and Miss Duncomb her warm toddy (in double quantity for the comfort of the visiter); and then the gentleman began again, exactly where he had left off, and warmed by his genial "tumbler," paused not till he had related every circumstance of Mr. Hannibal Burn's visit. Doubt gave way before a statement so conclusive, and then they all set to work to define what the crime was, for which the unfortunate family were about to atone to justice. But here the fair senate could not quite agree; and each

advanced such powerful arguments in support of her own theory, that what was at first conjecture, soon became conviction to each positive arguer; and when they set off on the following morning to publish the news, each one stated a different offence, as that for which they were about to be apprehended; so that before the end of the day, there remained hardly a crime in the calendar, of which the English family were not believed guilty, by some part of the population of Rochester.

There were not many people in the town who experienced much sorrow at the news. Mrs. Fidkin received a visit from Mrs. Bevan herself. She was in the act of preparing to go out with Athena and the General; but Mrs. Bevan's brow wore a look so pregnant of news, that they all three stopped as by common consent.

"Sit down, Mrs. Bevan, sit down, pray; it is a long time since we have seen you. How do all the ladies do? Any news stirring, Mrs. Bevan?"

"Mercy on me, Mrs. Fidkin! hav'n't you heard it?"

"Heard it?—heard what?"

"For God's sake tell us, Mrs. Bevan," said the accomplished Athena, whose inquiring mind was ever eagerly on the watch for intelligence.

"Well, then, I am sure it is a grief to have such news to tell; why, these Gordon people, ma'am, as I know you was so genteel as to visit, what have they turned out, but a parcel of scamps and pick-pockets run away from justice?"

Mrs. Fidkin was a good deal surprised, but she did not choose to say so.

"Well, Mrs. Bevan, after all there is nothing very surprising in that."

"Not a bit, not a bit," said the General; "what could you expect of English people, but to find that they are—English."

"Why that's true, too, General; and it's just what Mrs. Cornish says. For certain there is nobody knows more of the fashionable world than Mrs. Cornish; and she never quitted say-

ing that there was nothing in the least bit degree genteel about any of them. The old man, in particular, she always said, was as unlike as could be to the men of fashion she had been used to associate with. I cannot realize how you, General, and the Warners, and other people of distinction, could have been taken in by him."

"Speak for yourself, Mrs. Bevan, if you please," replied the indignant surveyor of the district; "I never was taken in by any of them, for a single instant; and there's Athena that can tell you the same. We didn't, may be, choose to sing out through the town just what we three thought and said among ourselves, but there was not one among us that didn't smell a rat,—I can tell you that."

"The General just tells you God's truth, Mrs. Bevan," said the lady of the mansion; "'twas no way from want of finding out their want of real gentility that led us to countenance them; it was the identical same reason as makes the General alway commence civil-

ities with all new comers. In General Fidkin's public situation, you know, Mrs. Bevan, that there is a constant requirement of politeness."

"For my part," joined in the accomplished Athena, "I found no great difficulty in discovering the extent of the young lady's claim to distinction. I certainly have never been taught to hold the English nation in very high estimation, yet still I imagine that a well-raised young lady, even in that antiquated country, must have a handsomer share of accomplishments than this Miss Gordon appears to possess."

"My! you don't say so!" exclaimed Mrs. Bevan; "why, what a delusion Madam de Clairville has put upon us on that point. Mrs. Cornish, you know, like all ladies of fashion, lays great store by the French, and Paris, and all that; and she made a direct requirement of madam, what progress the miss had made in genteel learning; and to hear her, you would have thought the girl was fit to be a lord's daughter, at the least."

“When people wear such clothes as Madam de Clairville,” observed Mrs Fidkin, “I should not be much inclined to take their judgment, let them be of what country they would. For my share, I won’t deny but what I was partly led on in my civility by seeing what a sight of nice things the girl had got belonging to her; and partly too, I must confess, by the natural expectancy of their giving a handsome party before they quitted.”

“Well, ma’am,” said Mrs. Bevan, rising to “progress” with her news through the town, “we are none of us very likely to be rewarded in that way for the politeness we have showed, as by what I can hear, they are all likely to be carried handcuffed out of the town before many hours are gone.”

Miss Duncomb’s first visit was to the family of Mr. Wilson. The master of the house was in his study, and Miss Duncomb was not one of the ladies whom the well-tutored Judy was accustomed to usher to that apartment. She found the females of the family at work round

the drawing-room table, and Mr. Robert indulging with Ariosto (a small pocket volume, bound in red morocco, and neatly gilt, after the manner of a prayer-book) near the fire. If Miss Duncomb ever ventured to relax an inch from the rigid stiffness of her general demeanour, it was in this drawing-room. It was at once the star-chamber to whose edicts she looked for the support of her church, and the emporium of fashion, the free entrance into which constituted her principal claim to worldly distinction.

It was habitual to her to enter this room with a smile: she did so now; but the next moment, and while she was welcoming the extended hands of the ladies, she raised her eyes to heaven, and uttered a deep sigh. But as this, too, was by no means unusual, the three ladies resumed their seats without taking any particular notice of it.

“ Oh! Mrs. Wilson!” she began; “ oh, my dear young ladies! To see such goodness, such Christian charity, such heavenly humble-mind-

edness abused and imposed upon, is enough to break one's heart."

Here Miss Duncomb drew forth her pocket-handkerchief from her black velvet bag.

"What's the matter, ma'am?" said the pious and well-dressed Mrs. Wilson.

"You hav'n't heard it then, ladies? Nor you, Mr. Robert? I beg your pardon, my dear young gentleman, for interrupting your studies; I see what they are upon; that is worthy, Mr. Robert, of your father's son. But oh, sir, I bring you a warning and an ensample. Put away that work, Miss Emma, I know the pattern; you had it from her! Oh, Mrs. Wilson! the Gordons are found out, one and all. The girl is—I cannot speak what; and the men and his accomplices are going to be taken in chains to the tower of London, for highway robbery and felony!"

"The Lord be good to his sinful creatures!" exclaimed the minister's lady; "what has not sister Williams to answer for! And son Robert within an inch of marrying the creature! And

Emma and Lucy sitting with her in the congregation! And we all dining with them in the face of day! Are you surely availed of what you say, Miss Duncomb?"

"From any other but you, Mrs. Wilson, I should disdain to answer such a question. Yes, ma'am, I am availed of it, and I bow low at the footstool of the Lord to forgive my intercommuning with such infidels and heretics. . . . Only think, Miss Emma, of your walking lock and lock from church with her!"

"Upon my word," said the young lady, "I think it is a very singular story, and I really must consult papa before I give implicit faith to it. I do not, in the least, mean to doubt your veracity, Miss Duncomb, but it is just possible, you know, that you have been deceived."

"I beg your pardon, there, Miss Emma," replied the visitor, with a look of great indignation; "when you have progressed a little further in life, you will know that the chosen of the

Lord's people are not those whose tongue is in the way of liars."

"Oh dear, no, ma'am; I only meant that it was possible you might be mistaken. Papa and my brother Robert think the Gordons very genteel people. Is papa in his study, Robert?"

"I believe so, Emma," replied the young man; and the brother and sister left the room together.

"I hope it is not your opinion too, my dear ma'am," said Miss Duncomb, "that I am a backbiter and defamer of the innocent? God is my witness that my life is past in the exercise of the Christian religion, for the glory of God, and the benefit of his people; and I did not expect that one of your daughters would have spoken so to me."

"Never mind Emma, Miss Duncomb: she always says just what she likes, because her blessed father is so partial to her. But in the name of the holy Gospel, tell us some particulars of this awful discovery."

“God forbid, Mrs. Wilson, that we should any of us soil our lips with the words that would go to tell the particulars. You know it would be worse for me than for you; for blessed as you are, Mrs. Wilson, in being the wife and helpmate of a holy minister of God, (and, oh! such a minister!) it must be allowed that I am still less fit than you to speak such words.”

“Go out of the room, Lucy,” said the mother; “it is not fitting that such as you should hear of such things as these. Go and read the ‘Sinner’s Guide,’ my daughter.”

The young lady left the room, but evidently with a reluctant step. Mrs. Wilson waited till the door closed after her, and then resumed the conversation.

“The Lord in his holy mercy forbid that I should ever lead maid or wife into saying what was not befitting for a Christian woman to speak, Miss Duncomb; but I cannot but think that sisters of the same congregation, as we are, it is our bounden duty to relieve our minds to

each other on such matters as these. 'Offences will come, saith the Lord;' you know where that is, Miss Duncomb? And then follows, 'Woe unto them by whom offence cometh;' but there is not a word about woe to any Christian women who talk together about it, for the edification of their own souls."

"Well, then, Mrs. Wilson, I am willing to tell all I know, though I must make allusion therein to what should neither pass the lips nor enter the head of a Christian sister, whose life is dedicated to works of holiness and religious love. That girl they call Miss Gordon is—"

Miss Duncomb paused to breathe. Mrs. Wilson's mouth and eyes were open, as well as her ears.

"What is she, Miss Duncomb? In the name of the Lord, tell me."

"No better than she should be;" replied the holy oracle, in a tone of most exciting mystery, and then rose to depart.

"But stop a minute, can't you, sister Dun-

comb : what has she done ? and who is her——
her confederates ?”

Whether it was that Miss Duncomb had nothing to say, or that she was too pure to utter it, appeared very doubtful to Mrs. Wilson ; and angry with herself for the unusual exertion she had made, which she looked upon as equally unchristian-like and ungenteel, she suffered her guest to depart, which she did with a most mysterious shake of the head, and then repaired to the study of her husband ; having first (as in duty bound, and by especial command) knocked at the door, she entered, and found the holy man conversing with his son and eldest daughter, on the subject of Miss Duncomb's visit.

He had heard all that they had to say with much interest, and when it was concluded, he smiled with a little scorn, and a great deal of charity, as he replied,

“ All stuff and nonsense, you may depend upon it.”

“ I thought so,” said Miss Emma, and left

the room without waiting to hear more, determined without farther delay to send for the dress Miss Gordon had promised to lend her as a pattern.

“ Whence can have arisen all this nonsense, I wonder?” said Robert Wilson to his father; “ Miss Duncomb loves a scandalous story to her heart, and has a prodigious faculty of beating out a little into a great deal; but I do not think she can have altogether invented this history of fetters and felony; still less certainly do I believe it all true. What do you think can have given rise to this gossip?”

“ Upon my word, Robert, you ask for a great deal more information than I can give you. There is certainly some degree of mystery attached to these people; but I do not conceive Miss Duncomb at all likely to discover the means of solving it. You may do as you like, as to continuing your intimacy with them; but as far as I am concerned, I shall not permit any of Miss Duncomb’s marvellous histories to influence my conduct. They are elegant and

accomplished people, and with their private history in England I can have nothing to do."

"But, husband! will you let your precious daughters risk their salvation, by being seen of all eyes, to associate with a creature that is no better than she should be?"

It was not the custom of the family to pay any very particular attention to the observations that fell from Mrs. Wilson. Her husband had never been heard to speak rudely to her; but somehow or other she stood in most prodigious awe of him, and whatever justice there might be in the decision of the younger branches, that their mother was a "most uncommon great fool," she had sagacity enough to read more authority, in the turn of his eye, than many ladies, who pass for great geniuses, can in the most plainly expressed commands of their husbands.

There was something, on this occasion, in the no-notice of his manner, that prevented any repetition of her fears on the part of his meek

helpmate; and something more in the style of arranging his chair, and unlocking his writing desk, which to her practised comprehension spoke as plainly as "angels trumpet mouthed," that she had better go out of the room as fast as she could. She did so, without uttering another word respecting the salvation of her daughters, and the father and son were left together.

"At any rate, sir," said the young man, "I think it will be but prudent to inquire a little more about the matter, before we continue to make ourselves remarkable by our intimacy with them. Notwithstanding the high estimation in which you are held, there are many who would delight to find some opportunity of attacking you. The very circumstance of my having been so much with them, has, I know, already created a great deal of jealousy and ill-will; and if any thing has really transpired against them, I certainly do not mean to be such a Quixote, as to do battle with the good people of Rochester in their defence; on the contrary,

I would much rather heal the mischief I have already done to my popularity, by being somewhat forward in giving them up."

Before this characteristic and conscientious avowal of the son could be answered by the father, Mr. Hicks was announced as being in the dining-room; and both gentlemen, fully aware that in his capacity of store-keeper, and class-leader, he was a man covetous of information, and liberal in dispensing it, hastened joyfully to meet him, convinced that they could not have a better opportunity of learning whatever was going on in the town.

"Well, brother Hicks, how are you? Sit down, sit down, my good friend. Who spoke the prayer at Mrs. Wooley's last night?"

"It was sister Nutwell, Mr. Wilson."

"That's well. She is a pious woman, and only wants practice to be as powerful as any female in the congregation. Any news stirring about the town, Mr. Hicks?"

Mr. Hicks shook his head, and intended to look melancholy; but one of those little smiles

twinkled in his eyes, and wrinkled round his mouth, which are known to the initiated to announce tidings of backslidings somewhere.

“More than peaceable Christians wish to hear of, Mr. Wilson. You may, likely, remember my judgment of those people, as I travelled with in the stage from Utica, the month before the last—they what is now running such a rig in Mrs. Oaks’s house. I did not speak the words of leasing, Mr. Wilson, when I said they were scape-goats and run-aways. May be, it might have been as well for some, as out of respect I won’t name, if they had listened to the words of a Christian man, when he spoke in the way of warning. But what is done, cannot be undone, and I will pray the Lord that no evil consequences may come to you or your’s, Mr. Wilson, for having neglected it.’

“To tell you the truth, brother Hicks, it was more your account of those foreigners, than any thing else, which made me at first consider them as among those whom it was the duty of a

Christian minister to watch over, and guide in the way of righteousness: I do not remember that you said any thing worse of them than that they were very lavish in their manner of spending money. But what is it that you have heard of them now?"

"Only," said Mr. Hicks, with another little smile, "that the police from New York are after them."

"Who told you this, Mr. Hicks?"

"I don't think this matters much, Mr. Wilson. You need not be afraid to take the word of a serious Christian. However, I have no objection in life to tell you—I had it from Hannibal Burns himself. That is to say, he told me as much as that he was come down here again on business; and a friend of mine wormed out of him pretty considerable neatly, who it was he was after."

"Where is Burns?" inquired young Wilson.

"He puts up at the Union, Mr. Robert."

The young man left the room, determined to sift the matter to the bottom.

petition of the tale ; but she no longer doubted what she should do. She had long felt convinced that some powerful and unavowed reason had driven this English family from their home ; but a still stronger assurance of their worth had fixed itself on her mind, and she only waited for the departure of her uncle, to communicate to Miss Gordon the danger that threatened them.

Caroline, meanwhile, who was gradually recovering from her dream of love, had occupied herself on the morning of this disastrous day, in planning a meeting with Lady Darcy in Canada. A map lay before her, and she had been tracing, with her pencil, the route to Niagara. "The Countess would die," she mentally exclaimed, "if she were to sojourn in this land of whiskey, and equal rights. With such a mind as my father and Edward describe, she would weep at what makes me laugh. No, it must not be here that we restore her Edward to her."

Caroline was in a pensive, but by no means

in a melancholy mood. "What folly," she exclaimed aloud, and smiling, as she thought of her late determination to be in love a little longer.

A new scheme had taken possession of her fancy. She shared with Edward, and her father, the conviction that Lady Darcy's narrative might be depended upon; and if Dally lived, a short time must bring the truth to light, as there were not only many persons interested to discover it, but also many, who must be able to disclose it. Lady Darcy was evidently miserable in England; how much happier would she be in awaiting the result with them. It would be so delightful! Her father, Edward, and herself, would write to her; they would meet at Niagara, then go to Quebec, sing the Canadian boat-song as they navigated the St. Lawrence, and then return all together to England, to enjoy in London the interest and the *éclat* that so romantic a history must ensure.

The sweet Emily should go with them, for

she could not live without her, and she and her friend should be the stars of a season; and then—while these agreeable visions were arranging themselves in a series of beautiful pictures on her fancy, the door of the parlour suddenly opened, and the two “helps” made their appearance in a very unceremonious manner, followed by Robert, who appeared in a violent passion.

“How dare you break in upon Miss Gordon in this insolent manner, you impertinent huzzies? Leave the room this instant, or I’ll send for a constable,” said the enraged footman, as he struggled in vain to push them back.

“Keep your hands off me, you jail-bird you,” replied one of the girls; “you’ll send for a constable, will you? I expect you may save yourself the trouble; the constable will come without your sending, but ’t isn’t we as he’ll take up, I guess.”

“What does all this mean?” said Caroline, looking extremely terrified.

“It means,” said the two girls at once, in

spite of poor Robert, who in vain endeavoured to prevent their speaking, "it means, that you are thieves, and pickpockets, and murderers, escaped from jail!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Caroline, "where is my father?"

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Gordon; pray don't listen to what these wretched creatures say. My master will return soon, and then—"

"And then he will be tooked back to jail, where he comed from. Pay us our wages, you bad creature you," said one of the women, approaching Caroline so vehemently as to make her shrink back. "Pay us our wages, though 'tis a demeanment to touch the money of such outcasts."

The unfortunate Caroline, who had never before been addressed, but in the language of affection, admiration, or reverence, was perfectly overpowered, and covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears.

Robert seized the speaker by the arm, and with a powerful jerk fairly threw her out of

the room. The other followed, vowing vengeance for the violence, and declaring that she should see them all in the hands of justice before sun-down.

Having locked the door against them, the faithful servant turned to his young mistress, with an air of mingled deference and affection, and intreated her to compose her spirits, and prepare for leaving the place.

“My master and Mr. Smith are gone on one of their long walks, I am afraid, but we ought to have every thing ready for starting when they return; the whole town have got hold of some ridiculous story about my master; but it's fortunate, ma'am, that no one seems to have the least notion of the truth, and therefore, you know, ma'am, there can be no real danger; but any how, you must not stay here to be insulted, Miss Gordon.”

Caroline, who had recovered herself as soon as the vulgar abuse of the servants had ceased, listened attentively to Robert, and agreed with him in thinking that if the reports in circulation

only implicated her father, they had nothing to fear.

"Pay those two women, and dismiss them, Robert, we can do without them for a day or two: if Mr. Smith is not spoken of, there is no occasion to run away, though certainly we shall not wish to continue here long, if such stories as these foolish girls alluded to, are generally believed."

A knock at the front door obliged Robert to attend to it, as the nerves of William had been unable to bear the attack upon the "honour of his house," and he had already secured a situation as gentleman clerk, in a grocery store; in the next moment Emily Williams was ushered in.

Though Caroline had in some measure regained her composure, the traces of tears were still visible. Emily threw her arms around her, "You have heard it, then, my beloved Miss Gordon! but whatever the truth may be, and however necessary for you not to reveal it, never for a moment believe that I can doubt

you. Tell me, is there any thing I can do to serve you? I have not much power, but I have the will, and the courage, to do any thing you bid me."

"My own dear Emily! you cannot help me; but my faith in you shall equal your's in me.— Sit down, dear love, and I will tell you all: yes, Emily, though life hangs upon my breath, the life of one I shall ever dearly value, you shall know the truth; my father cannot blame me, and Edward,—I think Edward would wish that you should know the truth."

In a few moments Caroline had told her all. With cheeks now burning red, now deadly pale, and tearless eyes, that seemed straining to catch more than her ears could receive, Emily listened to the dreadful story; her tongue became parched; and it was with difficulty she articulated "His life? can they touch his life?"

"Yes, if the boy be dead."

"He is not dead; it cannot be!—His life? do they indeed seek his life?"

Her manner was so wild that Caroline was terrified.

"Emily, you must master these strong feelings, should you betray them, he is lost."

"You do not know me, Caroline. One moment, grant me one moment, dearest Miss Gordon."

With the freedom their friendship warranted, she went up-stairs into Caroline's room, and remained alone a few minutes; after which she returned to her agitated friend, with an air of quiet self-possession that surprised her.

"Trust me, Miss Gordon, you have nothing to fear from me;—but listen to me. From what I have just heard from my uncle, it is plain that it is your father who is supposed to have offended against the laws of his country. The expensive manner in which you do every thing, so unlike the habits of our country, have naturally suggested the idea that the crime attached to you is robbery. It is clear that the truth is not known. Listen to me then—young

as I am, I know the people, and I am certain that if you leave the place directly, you will be followed by reports and suspicions that will make your residence in any part of the country most painful, if not altogether impracticable. You cannot go privately, for every eye is upon you. If he—if Mr. Smith were legally pursued, and that this rumour were occasioned, as they say, by the arrival of officers of justice, you would not have been left so long ignorant of the fact. This is not the first time that your wealth has given rise to injurious suspicions, but they passed away, so it may be again. I must leave you, Miss Gordon, for I have been forbidden to visit you: send for Mr. Warner, tell him the reports that have reached you, and ask him if the introduction of Captain Birdmore be such as to enable him to contradict them. Do not blame me for deceiving my family, but I must see you, though without their knowing it. I think my mother will be at Mrs. Bevan's to-night; if so, I will come here."

So saying, she embraced her friend, and left her astonished at the collected firmness of her manner and language.

"No," exclaimed Caroline, "I did not know you, Emily; but I will listen to you, and follow your advice, even before my father returns."

Mr. Warner immediately obeyed her summons, but there was something in his eye, as he entered, which convinced her that he too had heard the stories in circulation.

"My father is from home, Mr. Warner," began Caroline, "and it is probable that he will not return till our late dinner hour; I have taken the liberty of sending for you, for the purpose of asking your advice in his absence."

Mr. Warner bowed.

"I think it probable, sir," she resumed, "that you may have already heard the strange rumours that I understand are prevalent through the town respecting us."

"I am sorry to say it, but I have, Miss Gordon."

"Will you have the goodness to tell me, whether the introduction sent by Captain Birdmore, was such as to satisfy your mind of the injustice and absurdity of them?"

"Miss Gordon, I can assure you that the introduction of Captain Birdmore was very influential with me; but I hope you'll excuse me, ma'am, it is but too probable that he may know nothing at all about the matter."

"May I ask you, of what nature the reports are which have reached you?"

"It would be nowise suitable, Miss Gordon, for me to repeat them to you, and the more so, as doubtless it is extremely probable that you, my poor miss, may know nothing about the matter yourself."

"Be assured, sir, my father has no secrets from me."

"Well, Miss Gordon, well, I don't know how that may be, but I am sorry to say that I think I can be of no service to you;—in the way of advice, however, I must say that I reckon the sooner you can quit Rochester the better."

So saying, the worthy member of Congress rose and took his leave.

How heavily the moments dragged along while Caroline sat waiting for her father and Lord Darcy. She blamed herself for having sent for Mr. Warner before their return; she blamed herself still more, for not having extorted from him the nature of the reports circulated.

Could she have ascertained with certainty that they did not touch the truth, she would have been perfectly indifferent to all that could have been said of them. At length, in her feverish anxiety, she dispatched a note to Madame de Clairville, requesting that she would come to her immediately.

The kind-hearted, and high-spirited French woman rose from the dinner-table the moment she had read the note, and hastened to comply with the wish it expressed, although every lady at table, on hearing the black help proclaim, "Here's a note from Miss Gordon, ma'am," uttered some unequivocal exclamation of in-

dignation or disdain. Miss Gordon thanked her warmly for her ready compliance, and entered frankly upon the subject of her anxiety. She confessed to her that there were circumstances connected with their temporary residence in America, which it was important to her father to conceal; adding, that she hoped it was not necessary to assure her, they were not such as in any way to implicate his honour.

Madame de Clairville earnestly and affectionately told her that she had never doubted it for a moment; but at the same time confessed that it would be nearly impossible for them to continue at Rochester, so vehement was the prejudice conceived against them.

“And of what do they accuse us?” inquired Caroline.

“Of any thing, or every thing, that enters their heads,” replied her friend. “Miss Duntcomb thinks that you are a married woman, run away from your husband, and that your father is the gallant. Mrs. Cornish says that your father has committed forgery, which she declares

to be the national crime of your country. Mrs. Oaks has not the slightest doubt but that Mr. Gordon has robbed the Bank of England, ah par exemple, she expects you will leave her house directly, and pay the full term besides. Mrs. Bevan believes that your papa is a bankrupt, running away from his creditors. And Miss Maria has little doubt but that the pale and interesting Mr. Smith, is the young Napoleon, and that your father is Sir Hudson Lowe, sent out to watch him."

Caroline was greatly relieved by finding that nothing approaching the truth mixed with all this nonsense, and Madame de Clairville's vivacity almost chased her terrors away.

"If all the inconvenience you have to fear is being driven from Rochester, ah, ma chère demoiselle! how can I pity you?"

"That evil will not be a heavy one, I confess," said Caroline. "I shall lament leaving you, and my dear Emily, but for the rest—I will own that I have had enough of them."

"Ah je vous crois bien! And then you have

so much to see! if your absence from your country must be prolonged, you should profit by the interval, to see every thing. You know my story, and why I am forced to linger here; but for you, there is much amusement! Will you not see Niagara?"

"Assuredly," said Caroline; "I was thinking of an expedition thither, when these frightful stories reached me."

"Eh bien ma chère, it is well something has happened to hasten you, for depend upon it, there will be a mill erected there before long.— If the Americans were to invade Italy, we should soon hear of their melting lead, or softening iron, over the crater of Vesuvius."

And thus she rattled on, till the gentlemen returned; when, with attentive delicacy, she took her leave, but said she hoped she might be permitted to take her coffee there à l'ordinaire.

Mr. Gordon had met Robert at some distance from the house, where he had, in fact, stationed himself, for the purpose of meeting his master, that he might spare Miss Gordon the painful

necessity of breaking to him and Lord Darcy the disagreeable news. As soon as Mr. Gordon found that amongst all the stories floating through the city, not one touched on the subject of their fear, he felt no further concern on the subject than what arose from his anxiety respecting the manner in which it might affect the spirits of Caroline; and the moment she found that he considered it of no other importance, than as occasioning a temporary inconvenience, her spirits rose again with their usual gay buoyancy, and she laughed heartily at the idea of being the only female in the house.

“But if we can get no servants, dearest, we really cannot stay here,” said her father; “and despite the warning voice that says, ‘let not your flight be in the winter,’ I think we must change the scene.”

“Well, if it must be so, it must,” said Caroline. “But notwithstanding all Madame de Clairville’s excellent reasons for leaving this wonderful city, and notwithstanding my own

super-abundant weariness of all the people in it, but one, the leaving that one, will go much nearer my heart than I could have believed possible six weeks ago—I shall never again see any thing like Emily Williams.”

“I do not think you would be likely to love her less, from seeing more of her, Caroline; and if so, a longer stay might only render your going more painful. Indeed, I think that nothing ought longer to detain us here. I really do not feel the slightest alarm respecting Edward, either here, or elsewhere; I have little doubt of the ultimate discovery of young Dally, and the happy conclusion of his unfortunate adventure; but I really do think, Caroline, that we should render ourselves almost unworthy of the friends we have left in our own land, if we continued to expose ourselves voluntarily to such insult as we have had heaped upon us here.”

“Do not look so awfully serious, my very best papa, or you will really frighten me out of my wits: I will set off whenever you please—

and believe me, much as I love my poor Emily, I feel the propriety of leaving Rochester, as much as you do. When do you think of going, papa?"

"In a day or two at farthest—to-morrow, if it be possible."

Lord Darcy had heard the news communicated by Caroline with wonderful philosophy, and had even joined the laugh at her whimsical establishment; but there was something in the decision of Mr. Gordon that checked his gaiety.

"Do you really think so, sir?" he asked, eagerly; "depend upon it, Mr. Gordon, a rumour founded on so vague a statement, will vanish into the air that gave it birth. It is our not having attended the Rochester routs that has raised their most sweet voices against us. Had they even hit the truth, I should not have greatly heeded it; my mother's last letter has armed me from head to foot. Indeed, you must not leave this place, for my sake, and travel in the midst of winter."

"Nay, Edward," said Caroline, "I think

that it will be rather for my sake ; for you see it is I, not you, that must become 'the help,' if we stay."

"No, no," said Mr. Gordon, "I certainly shall not stay in Rochester ; it will be easier to guard you against the cold in travelling, Caroline, than against the impertinence you are likely to meet with here. What you tell me of Mr. Warner is quite enough."

"It was pretty considerably disagreeable, certainly, papa ; but, as the moralist says, 'Adversity, though both ugly and venomous, is not without its jewels.' My misfortune of this morning brought two to light."

She then related the conduct of Emily, and the kindness of Madame de Clairville. Why did Lord Darcy colour, even to the top of his forehead ?

Caroline saw it. How rapid is the action of a woman's mind ! She saw it, and her fair cheeks faintly reflected the colour in his ; but at that moment she threw the last repentant ashes on the head of her first fancy, (for she

would no longer call it love,) and the kind and gentle feeling with which she internally uttered "dear Emily!" proved her to be one of the very sweetest creatures in the world. But was her penetration equal to her sweetness? Had the little romance she had for some time past been weaving, and to which she now gave the finishing touch, any other foundation than her own active imagination? Was she right in thinking that the cold proud eye which had shed nothing but reason and respect on her, beamed with passion when the name of Emily was mentioned? Could the seventh Earl of Darcy be free from the besetting sin of his race? Could any thing make him forget his Norman shield? We shall see.

Just at the usual hour of taking coffee, Madame de Clairville appeared, and was certainly greeted with more than usual pleasure.

"Why, what a heroine you are, Madame," said Mr. Gordon; "I will venture to affirm that you are come hither in direct violation of the

laws of Mrs. Bevan's boarding-house, made and directed in this case."

It was not with her usual gaiety that she replied, "Mais vraiment vous avez raison." And in answer to many other questions, she at length confessed, that "the ladies" had expressly declared it would be impossible for her to continue a member of their society, if she persisted in associating with people so notoriously depraved.

"And yet you are come to us again," said Caroline, affectionately embracing her.

"Could you think I should hesitate?" cried Madame de Clairville.

"Then, my dear lady, you still believe we are persons of honour?" said Mr. Gordon.

"Mon dieu, oui!"

"If so, my dear Caroline, I think it possible that the vexatious circumstances of this morning may prove a source of great happiness to you."

Mr. Gordon then proposed to Madame de

Clairville, in the most friendly and flattering manner, that she should join their party, and continue with them till their return to Europe, which recent letters, he said, made not improbable; or, at least, that she should make one of his family, as long as her inclination and circumstances would make it agreeable and convenient to her.

It is difficult to say whether Madame de Clairville or Miss Gordon was most pleased at this proposal. It was accepted with a graceful frankness that delighted them all.

Caroline eagerly asked if the arrangement might not take place directly.

"I really cannot let you venture among 'the ladies' again; it will be too dangerous to avow what you have done."

Madame de Clairville assured her that there was no occasion for this, as formal notice had been given her, that she must seek another home. Poor Mrs. Bevan, it appeared, would willingly have softened matters, and told the ladies, that doubtless madame would give up

the acquaintance as soon as she understood the affair, and that it was very difficult to make foreigners understand; but Mrs. Cornish would not hear of any temporising in the business, and explicitly declared, that if madame did not go, she would; on which Mrs. Bevan, in an agony of alarm, gave the indignant little French woman notice to "provide herself" directly; and Madame de Clairville had, in effect, deposited all her luggage at an hotel, before she came to Mr. Gordon's. She was thus immediately established as a member of the family; and notwithstanding the very unpleasant circumstances which had led to it, there was not one of the party who did not think it a most agreeable arrangement.

This affair was just settled, when Robert entered to say, that there was a gentleman at the door who wished to speak with Mr. Gordon.

"Desire him to walk in," was the reply; and a gentleman made his appearance, whom none of the party had ever seen before.

"My visit is one of business, sir," he began, casting his eyes towards the ladies.

"If it be business which concerns me," replied Mr. Gordon, "there is no occasion to give you the trouble of walking into another room; I have no concealments from my family."

"As you please, sir; but I am sorry to say, it is not an agreeable errand which brings me here."

Mr. Gordon bowed, as a signal that he might proceed.

"I am come on the part of Mrs. Oaks, sir."

The gentleman paused, and Mr. Gordon again bowed.

"Mrs. Oaks, sir, has desired me to inform you, that it is her wish that you should quit her premises with as little delay as possible."

"It is very probable," said Mr. Gordon, "that I shall do so before the end of the term for which I have engaged them; but till that term expires, Mrs. Oaks cannot possibly have any influence upon my going or staying."

"I ask your pardon there, sir; I calculate that you are not availed of what you say: any how, sir, Mrs. Oaks is ready to maintain in any court of justice, that she never did make any bargain or agreement with you whatever; and that you are here during her pleasure, and no longer."

"I certainly did not make the engagement myself, but my daughter did. Caroline, was it not for three months that you took this house?"

"Assuredly, papa."

"Pray, sir, what age may the young lady be?"

Mr. Gordon instantly perceived the trick that was to be practised upon him; it was, however, of too little consequence to be worth a contest.

"I understand you, sir," he replied, "the engagement is not a legal one; but in proving it otherwise, I presume, Mrs. Oaks is aware that she has no claim upon me for the rent."

"I ask your pardon again, sir; Mrs. Oaks has a good and competent witness to prove that

you yourself said you were willing to pay her what she chose for the accommodation of coming into it."

Mr. Gordon indulged in a smile, but immediately resumed the tone of business.

"Though Miss Gordon is not of age as a principal, she is competent as a witness."

"I am sorry to differ, sir; but as the miss was employed as your agent, she can't be your witness."

"All this is too paltry to suit me, sir; let your employer name her charge; if I think it a proper one, I shall pay it; if not, she must seek her remedy in a court of justice."

"Indeed, sir?" said the man of business, with a look of very genuine surprise.

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Gordon, rising. "It is never my habit to refuse a just demand, or to comply with an unjust one. Have you any further commands for me?"

"Why, sir, respecting the time of quitting, Mrs. Oaks wishes you to be pretty prompt. She says the young lady is partial to moving

house hastily, and therefore presumes you'll make no difficulty of quitting to-night."

Mr. Gordon rang the bell.

"Show this gentleman out, Robert."

"Sir!" said the startled lawyer.

Mr. Gordon returned to his seat by the fire, and resumed his conversation with Madame de Clairville. Mrs. Oaks's legal adviser was puzzled: he looked at Robert, as if he hoped he would give him a cuff to hasten his departure, which would have been ten good dollars in his pocket; but the civilized domestic contented himself with holding open the parlour door for him, through which at length, not knowing what else to do, he passed in silence. Before the circumstances of this visit had been fully discussed, another knock at the door was heard. Lord Darcy looked from the window.

"It is dear Emily," said Caroline, "I know her knock."

She entered hastily, and with traces of painful emotion on her face.

"You are come to bring comfort to me,

dearest," said Caroline; "but indeed you look as if you wanted it yourself."

"Alas! I bring you no comfort, and I do indeed want more than you can give me. Let me speak to you alone, Miss Gordon."

Caroline immediately accompanied her into the dining-room.

"There is a police officer from New York in the town, Caroline; and it is for *him* that he has been inquiring."

"How do you know this, Emily?"

"I saw the man at my uncle's, where I was sent this afternoon by my mother. My cousin Emma led me out of the room, on a hint from her father, but she told me that she had heard him say, 'the young man resides here with him, does he?' And Emma knows the man to be a police officer."

"And is that all that has happened, my love, to make you look so pale? Come back into the parlour, Emily; I think papa will re-assure you, as he has done me. He does not appear in the slightest degree alarmed about Edward;

and I am sure he would, were there cause for it."

On re-entering, they found Mr. Gordon occupied in explaining to Madame de Clairville the real nature of their situation.

"It is not a secret to be told lightly," said he, "but we have found two friends in Rochester," holding out a hand to madame and Emily, "with whom we can have no reserves."

"And do you think, sir, it will be safe for you to continue here?" said Emily: "it can hardly be doubted, I think, that this man is sent expressly to be on the look out."

"If so, Miss Williams, it were vain to run from him. Our party is too remarkable to escape notice. But you do not any of you know yet, that Edward and I almost decided, during our walk this morning, to absent ourselves no longer. We are both of us persuaded that the boy he was said to have killed is alive; and if so, there is little danger that any degree of perjury could long injure Lord Darcy.

There are, however, many objections to his immediately returning to England. As a peer, his detention would be an affair of great expense and trouble, not to mention that much advantage may be gained by previously taking legal opinions on the business, in a very different manner from what has been hitherto adopted. For all these reasons, I think, if Caroline approves it, that we shall do well to continue our wanderings for a few months longer;—but, certainly, we will not stay in Rochester.”

Emily hid her face in her hands, and burst into tears. Lord Darcy left the room. Caroline endeavoured to soothe her friend by the fondest expressions of affection.

“Do not make me feel the banishment from this place so very painful, my sweet Emily; we shall meet again, my dearest friend, where no Mrs. Oaks, or uncle Wilson, shall interfere to prevent it.”

“And that will be in heaven,” said Emily.

“Ah qu'elle est naïve!” exclaimed Madame de Clairville, laughing.

"No, indeed, Emily," said Caroline, cheerfully; "my engagements are not de si longue main,—I look forward to many years of intercourse on earth. Shall it not be so, papa? Shall we not run away with her, as you know I threatened to do long ago?"

"Indeed, I should be very sorry to think our delightful little concerts were over," replied Mr. Gordon; "but I fear any attempt at the present moment to take away Miss Williams would really expose us to danger from the civil authorities. I fear there is no hope of your being permitted to go with us, my dear?"

"Oh no, sir," replied the poor girl, "I am here only by stealth, and I must return immediately:—you go to-morrow, then?—and we shall meet no more."

"Emily," said Caroline, earnestly, "I should have no strength to go, if I thought so. Tell me, my friend, do you not think that when this mist, which has been raised by the breath of folly, malice, or ignorance rather, shall have passed away, your mother may permit your

visiting me? We are not vagrants in our own land, Emily."

"God grant she may do so, my dearest, best Miss Gordon. You are sorry to leave me, I am sure of it; but you know not what it is to be left, as I shall be!"

"Chère petite," said madame, "qu'elle est touchante!"

"Remember, Emily," said Mr. Gordon, kindly, "that you have many years before you; and so has Caroline. Trust to her steady attachment: you are not made to be loved and forgotten."

Emily raised her tearful eyes to Mr. Gordon with a look of the deepest affection and gratitude.

"God bless you, sir, for all your kindness to me. I will remember what you now say when I most want comfort. Caroline! dear Miss Gordon! I must go."

"Not till you tell me how I can write to you, Emily: how can I hear from you, if I may not tell you where we are?"

"If you direct to me at home, I shall never get your letters; they will be read by my uncle, and I shall be forbid to answer them."

"Mais mon Dieu! il n'y a rien de si facile; adressez poste restante, et passez à la poste vous-même."

The simple expedient of the little French woman was joyfully hailed by all the party. A fond embrace, and a sobbing "God bless you," and they parted. But Mr. Gordon was right; Emily could not be loved and forgotten: and her brief intercourse with the passing strangers left deep and lasting traces on their hearts.

Though greatly provoked by the behaviour of Mr. Warner, as faithfully related to him by Caroline, Mr. Gordon thought it was due to the friend of Captain Birdmore, to see him before he left Rochester. Early on the following morning, therefore, he repaired to his house, and requested he might be summoned from the office. There was in the manner of Mr. Gordon, a mixture of suavity, and dignity, which ren-

dered it very difficult to treat him with rudeness, or impertinence of any kind ; and the way in which Mr. Warner accosted him, though sufficiently stiff and cautious, was less repulsive than that he had assumed in his short interview with Caroline. Mr. Gordon addressed him without any circumlocution, on the business which brought him there.

“ There are circumstances, Mr. Warner, with which Captain Birdmore is acquainted, but which it is not my purpose at present to disclose, which render my continuing some time longer absent from England, convenient to me. From what I learnt from my daughter on returning home yesterday, it appears that you conceive it advisable for us immediately to leave Rochester, in consequence of reports against my character, which it seems are in circulation here.”

Mr. Gordon paused.

“ Mr. Gordon, sir, I am nowise accountable for what people say,” replied Mr. Warner.

“ Assuredly not, Mr. Warner: I by no means wish to call you to account, either for what

others may have said, or for what you may yourself have thought. It was impossible for me to leave the town without calling on you, sir; and repeating my thanks for the civilities we have received from you."

Mr. Warner felt, as he looked and listened to him, that if he were a rogue, he was a very cunning one.

"I wish, sir," he replied, "that nothing had happened to hasten your departure from our town. I hope, Mr. Gordon, that you won't carry away any prejudices against us, on account of it. You must be availed, sir, that there is no place on the earth where rumour won't work, Mr. Gordon, and those who don't speak, can't altogether avoid listening."

Mr. Gordon bowed.

"We must conduct so, Mr. Gordon, as to cultivate the opinions of our fellow-citizens."

"It is very true, Mr. Warner; and yet I think, that, in most places, people wait for some stronger indication of iniquity, before they

accuse a stranger of the blackest crimes, than their spending more money, and drinking less whiskey than is usual in this country. However, we will pass that. Will it be consistent, sir, with the deference you owe to the opinions of your fellow-citizens, to do me the favour of settling the affair of my rent with the lady whose house I am in? I agreed to pay her one hundred dollars for three months: we have been in it rather less than two; but I should certainly have paid her the whole sum, had she not sent a very insolent message to me last night, requiring my immediately quitting her house, and stating that no written agreement existed. I shall leave the house when it suits me, which will probably be in the course of to-day, and I am willing to pay her sixty-six dollars, sixty-seven cents, that the fraction may be in her favour; but should she require a cent beyond, she must seek it by means of an action."

By the readiness with which Mr. Warner accepted this commission, it appeared either

that the business itself was agreeable to him, or else that he was well pleased to show Mr. Gordon, that his respect for his fellow-citizens was not so great as to interfere with his freedom of action. Having deposited the above mentioned sum in the gentleman's hands, Mr. Gordon left him, and proceeded to the house of Mr. Wilson. He found him sitting in his comfortable library, which contained more books than all the houses in the town put together, and surrounded by a large party of ladies, all of whom seemed earnestly engaged in a conversation which Mr. Gordon's arrival interrupted.

A dead silence followed his entrance, broken only by the few formal words of salutation, rather than of welcome, uttered by Mr. Wilson. Then one lady rose and took her leave, and then another; each as she passed Mr. Gordon casting her eyes upon the ground, and raising them again with a glance of intelligent dismay, as she muttered an agitated "good morning" to the different members of the family, the females of which escorted the last lady from the room; and

Mr. Gordon found himself tête-à-tête with Mr. Wilson.

Conscious innocence alone could hardly have sufficed to render the smile with which Mr. Gordon watched this scene, so entirely void of bitterness; but conscious importance helped it out; and it was without the slightest affectation that he turned to Mr. Wilson after the door closed behind them, and said with an air of great good humour—

“I am really very sorry, sir, that my calling to say farewell, should have driven all the ladies from you; but a plague-spot is upon me, and I frighten every body.”

Mr. Wilson was quite decided not to lose a single member of his congregation by his friendship for the elegant Englishman; nevertheless, he was as fully persuaded as before, that Mr. Gordon's motives for leaving his country had no mixture of vulgar villainy in them. He suspected something, but knew not what. He had at first fancied that it might be some political escapade; but the more he saw of Mr. Gordon

the less probable this appeared : he seemed not the kind of stuff of which demagogues and radicals are made ; and at length the theory which appeared the least improbable, was that a fatal duel had rendered it prudent for him to leave England. As soon as they were alone, therefore, he ventured to shake hands with his guest, saying, with less of sanctification than he generally used,—

“ I am very sorry, sir, that you should meet with so much rudeness ; but this is a wild country, Mr. Gordon, and we must not expect to find the people who inhabit it, greatly qualified to judge of the strangers who come among them.”

“ We are the more obliged, sir, to those who venture to believe it possible that it may be necessary to conceal one’s business, and yet be an honest man. But I will not detain you, sir ; pray make my compliments to your son, and tell him that if he should ever visit England, it would give me pleasure to see him—he would find me out without much difficulty, my town

residence is Cavendish Square, and when in the country, I reside in Dorsetshire."

So saying, he took his leave, and having thus done all that he thought civility required of him, he returned home, perfectly ready to take advantage of the celerity with which Robert had already arranged every thing for their departure.

CHAPTER XXIII.

When rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

SHAKESPEARE.

A FEW hours took them beyond reach of the scandal of Rochester, and a few more would have sent Mr. Hannibal Burns after them, according to the orders he had received from England, had not fresh instructions arrived from thence to render it unnecessary. The orders which Nixon Oglander had caused to be sent out to this active agent of the New York police, were issued before it was known at Harding Abbey that the wanderers intended to pass the winter at Rochester.

The Sergeant learnt this important piece of

intelligence from his uncle; and a singular coincidence made it particularly agreeable to him. In the early, and less cautious season of his life, Nixon Oglander had been one of a set of spirited youths, who resolved by uniting the force of their wit and genius, to resist the blind and blundering decrees of chance at the gaming-table. In other, and more vulgar words, they had determined to win at any rate; and they did so, for a considerable time, with impunity. At last a most unlucky blunder of one threatened to overwhelm with irremediable ruin and disgrace the whole confederacy. There were among them some, who held stations in which such an event would involve consequences worse than death; the most distinguished of these, was the unprincipled, yet still proud, Nixon Oglander.

To save himself from exposure, he bribed one whom he called his friend, to take the entire odium on himself; the sum to be immediately paid for this service was handed over at the gaming-table, and Oglander was classed

among the last victims of a system of fraud, the detected manœuvres of which made the nine days' wonder of the season. It was the report of this heavy loss that had reached his uncle, and produced the change in his plans respecting him, which has before been mentioned. For this devoted friend to continue in London, or even in England, under the load of infamy thus publicly borne, was impossible, even for the philosophical Colonel Brown. Bidding adieu, therefore, to the scene on which he had played his sometimes brilliant, but always unprincipled part, he betook himself with all that remained of his unrighteous acquisitions to America. The friendship of Nixon Oglander did not content itself by paying the sum stipulated, but obtained for him, in the most influential quarters, letters of introduction, in which, under the style and title of the Rev. Mr. Wilson, he was stated to be an amiable, and accomplished young man, travelling for information. He first repaired to the city of Washington, and his letters sufficed to procure him the *entrée*

into the best part of the motley society to be found there. His fortune, though considerably improved, was still not such as to satisfy his wish of reposing for the remainder of his days in abundance and security.

No man had been exposed to greater vicissitudes than Colonel Brown; he had found himself at different, and no very distant periods, the pet of palaces, and the refuse of a spunging-house. Paris had shared with London, in giving him a taste of all that is most sweet, and all that is most bitter to a dissolute "man of feeling." He had long been utterly hardened in principle; but was still feelingly alive to all that concerned his comfort; and his hope and object was to place himself in a situation where he should no longer be exposed to the desolation of an unconnected existence, and the nervous misery of eternal vicissitude.

No hope or wish of becoming an honest man ever entered into his imagination; but he ardently desired to be considered as an honourable and respectable individual. The most obvious

again. Now attend to me, and you shall find profit in it. There is a boy who stands between me and my inheritance. Accident has thrown him into danger; he is suspected of a crime, of which he is innocent, and has fled to the town in which you live. He calls himself Smith, and the person he is with, is called Gordon; but the boy is Earl of Darcy, and heir to enormous wealth, a noble part of which will fall to me if he——if he ceases to trouble me. Now mark me. It is my will, that boy should perish. But you tell me you are of ‘high standing,’ and you may not like to do the job. Though I have known the time, Bob, when you would not have let your standing come between you and a thousand pounds.

“It may be, however, that I shall not want your hand. I will pay you for your head. The fellow my young cousin fancies he has murdered, is in my pay. I have sent him to America, both to keep him out of sight, and to act as a spy upon Master Smith; for which office he is better fitted than any other, as he

hates him, for some petty spite of his own. When I despatched him, I knew not the destination of the runaway, and therefore told him to await orders at New York. By the same packet which conveys this, I have now written, commanding him to repair immediately to Rochester, and to call upon you for instructions.

“You understand me, Bob: I must have the business done. Let it be done between you, and I care not how it be divided. Accidents sometimes happen, you know, in your wild country. I have been told that the Indians are dangerous; and it has been said that more than one life has been lost by falling over rocks, while looking at water-falls—manage as you will, I care not. I gave young Dally, the gentleman who will speedily make you a visit, a hundred pounds to start with: he shall have a hundred more when the work is done; you shall have a thousand when you tell me of it. As it will be for my own interest to keep my part of the engagement, you will not doubt my doing so. Can I give you better security? My uncle

Mr. Wilson again replaced the letter, carefully locked his desk, and set off to inquire at the principal stage-office every particular respecting the route his future friends had taken. He easily ascertained enough to convince him that they were gone towards the lakes, and felt little doubt that he should find them at Niagara. He therefore took his place in the Lockport stage for the next morning, and returned home in most happy harmony of spirits, anticipating the satisfaction with which he should receive the thanks and blessings of the elegant Mr. Gordon, the interesting Lord Darcy, and the lovely Caroline. He saw, too, in long, but bright perspective, the more substantial advantages arising from the line of conduct he had determined to pursue. What were a thousand pounds compared to the patronage for himself, and his family, of an English earl, on whom he had bestowed life, rank, and revenue? He even luxuriated in the hope that under such patronage, with the shelter of a new name, and twenty-seven additional years, he might venture once

again to enter London, that dear emporium of all the pleasures he was capable of tasting. Before giving the necessary orders for the preparations to be made for his departure, he again took the important letter from his desk, and having once more perused it, committed it to the flames, with a look of triumphant scorn. He was then proceeding to summon his daughters, in order to set them about such packing as he required, when he heard himself inquired for at the house door, by a voice perfectly unknown to him.

He paused at the door of his library to learn who his visitor might be, but he would not send in his name, saying, he only wished to speak to the gentleman for a minute.

"Show him in," said Mr. Wilson; and the black help ushered in a young man, apparently not much above twenty years of age, but who wore a look of confidence, or rather audacity, which belonged to a later period of existence.

His dress was much in the style of that of a

servant out of place, and even this appeared too superb for him to wear easily.

His hat was new, and in that American style of elaborate *furriness*, which gives to the head of a trans-atlantic beau some resemblance to a mop. This "rich beaver" he held in a sort of embrace with one arm, while the other was extended towards Mr. Wilson, as an invitation to perform the friendly ceremony of shaking hands. The reverend colonel, however, who had not yet learnt to relish the universal handling of his adopted country, retreated a step, as it did not appear to him, that on the present occasion any thing was to be gained by submitting to it. He had grievously erred, however, in his estimate of the importance of his visitor; for instantly placing his hat on his head, and his arms in that kimbo fashion which denotes defiance, as surely as a lance in the rest, he exclaimed—

"D—n your American impudence—I am come here on a job, d'ye see, as shall make our hands acquainted, or the devil's in it. Here's

the letter of our employer: you'll see I've lost no time in obeying orders."

No words can express the bitter rage with which Wilson saw that the imprudence, or treachery, of his former associate, had placed him completely in the power of the vulgar, desperate young ruffian before him.

The letter to Dally was written in a character totally unlike that of the one received by Wilson, and equally so to the acknowledged handwriting of Sergeant Oglander; it ran thus:—

"DALLY,

"On the receipt of this, repair immediately to Rochester, in the western part of the State of New York. On arriving in this town, inquire for the house of the Rev. Mr. Wilson; go there, and be careful to see him alone. He is fully acquainted with the business you have in hand, and will give you the needful instructions as to the manner in which it is to be accomplished. I have already named to you the sum you are to receive, when the work you

have undertaken shall be completed. I will add twenty sovereigns more, if it be done within a month after you reach Rochester.

(Signed)

“YOUR EMPLOYER.”

The faculties of Wilson were ever ready for work on any emergency; and no man had greater command of voice and feature; yet for a moment he trembled before the audacious eye of his new associate.

His first idea was to deny his identity with the Mr. Wilson referred to in the letter; but a sort of panoramic view of the town of Rochester, pouring forth its swarms of prayerful females, rose before his eyes; he thought he saw them trotting from house to house, to hunt for the explanation of the scandal this denial would create. No; it was impossible to stand it, and the thought was abandoned.

“Sit down, Dally, sit down; how long have you been arrived?”

The look of angry defiance faded before the

friendly tone in which this was spoken; and the young smuggler seated himself in Wilson's luxurious arm chair, which, by a graceful use of the muscles of the lower man, he caused to roll forward on its castors towards the fire; then taking up the tongs to arrange the glowing brands to his fancy, he answered cheerily,

"Not an hour, my hearty; you shall find I arn't one to dream, when work's to be done. Give me a snack, and a draught of ale, with a glass of brandy to warm it, and I'm ready to set about it directly."

"Softly, Dally, don't speak so loud: we must consider of it."

"Consider away, then, old one; but make haste. I'm not the lad to lose twenty golden sovereigns, by twirling my thumbs when I ought to be stirring; give us something to eat, can't ye, while you are studying?"

Wilson shook with rage, but he mastered it, and rang the bell. The black girl entered.

"Bring meat and bread, and whiskey here."

"Here, Mr. Wilson?" remonstrated the free black help.

Almost the only innocent pleasure Mr. Wilson indulged in, was the endeavouring to make an English room of his library. Seldom was any American gentleman permitted to enter it, lest tobacco-juice should defile the rich carpet; the smell of whiskey was never suffered to pollute its atmosphere, and nothing grosser than a water-melon had ever been eaten there. But this was not a moment for such observances; and in no very gentle tone he reiterated the order.

The girl retreated with an emphatic "My!" and her tortured master turned to listen to the further amiable communications of his guest.

"I say,—that friend of your's, Squire Oglander, is a proper clever fellow. Did he write you word how he got at us in our strong hold, as we called it, without minding our dog, no more than if he had been a lamb?"

Wilson civilly assured him he knew nothing of the matter; and as Dally rehearsed the ad-

venture of the purse dropping among the embers, he contrived to make his countenance assume a look of amused attention, while amidst curses the most bitter against Oglander, he inwardly ruminated on every possible chance of escaping from the odious predicament in which he found himself.

There was something in the dashing, dare-devil wickedness of Dally, that convinced him he was not to be trifled with. He felt certain that, in technical language, he would "blow him," should he appear to flinch an inch, and that without the least compunction or delay. What, then, was he to do? Must he abandon the delightful scheme of being the friend and protector of the Earl of Darcy? Must he, instead of this, earn a poor thousand pounds, by acting the part of a hired bravo, with the young monster who sat opposite to him, as his assistant and confidant? While these tormenting uncertainties were pressing upon his mind, the girl entered with the refreshments he had ordered; and the eager appetite of his visitor

for a short time obtained him relief from his conversation; but the large draughts of whiskey with which he seasoned his repast, made his unfortunate auditor pay dearly for the interval of repose. His young eye glaring with incipient intoxication, and ferocious with a deep-rooted desire of revenge, Dally grasped the arm of his companion, exclaiming, in a tone most alarmingly audible—

“Look you, old one, I’ll have the sticking of him myself; he owes me a lot of blood, and come what will, he shall pay me.”

“Softly, Dally, softly, for God’s sake! if you are overheard, you will be dragged to prison, ’spite of all I can do to prevent it.”

“Shall I so, master? Then by jingo you shall go too, to keep me company. But you lie, I take it, old one; this is a free country, and you can’t have no prisons here, and that’s partly the reason why I came.”

He again seized the bottle, and was about for the third time to replenish his large glass, when Mr. Wilson, seeing the extreme danger

he ran from his becoming thoroughly intoxicated, contrived, while pretending to help him, to throw down the bottle on the hearth, and break it to pieces. The spirit which remained in it caught fire, and the sudden blaze made the startled youth stagger backward, more than half sobered by the fright. Wilson saw its effect, and was not slow in taking advantage of it.

"We must part now, Dally," said he, in a confidential tone; "but tell me where you are lodging, and I will call upon you when it gets dark."

The half stupified face immediately recovered its intelligence, and its insolence.

"I don't budge from out this house till you tell me where young Darcy is to be found; and I won't sleep till I have made him fall as low as he did me on Carbury strand; but I'll do my work better than he did: tell me where I may find him."

"Most willingly," said Wilson, more convinced than ever of the necessity of not quar-

relling with this desperado; "but you have far to travel yet, my friend, before you can come up with him; he has left this place some days; and it was only this morning that I learnt at the coach-office which way he was travelling."

Dally looked earnestly in his face, and the fumes of liquor seemed struggling with his natural sagacity.

"I must sleep before I settle it; but look out that you don't try to cheat our master. I don't mean the devil; I mean Oglander," and with a drunken chuckle, he prepared to compose himself in the arm-chair.

There were many reasons, however, which would have rendered his taking his repose there remarkably inconvenient; and with the prompt authority, which is seldom resisted by such as Dally, Mr. Wilson led him by the arm to the door of the house, saying—

"True, Dally, true, you must sleep, my good fellow; and when you are refreshed, come to me again."

With these words they parted, and the agi-

tated and miserable man returned to his library, now hateful with the fumes of liquor, and the remembrance of the scene that had passed there. He rang furiously, to have the fragments of the meal removed, and once more alone, he locked the door, threw open the windows, and flinging himself into a chair, not his contaminated bergère, he sat for half an hour completely buried in thought. The line of conduct he determined to adopt will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Thou marble hearted fiend!—SHAKESPEARE.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ A letter from you, after the interval that has elapsed since I heard from you, gave me very sincere pleasure. So many of my gayest hours were passed in your society, that it is almost a recovery of youth to remember them.

“ I have no nervous objections whatever to rendering you the assistance you require, which I think I shall be able to do without much difficulty ; but I confess, I cannot comprehend how one so quick in observation, and so discreet in action, could have been induced to select

such an agent as Dally for the business. With him I cannot act. A thousand pounds would but ill repay me for the loss of the estimation in which I stand here, and this loss could hardly be avoided, with such an associate. I have little doubt that I shall send you the notice necessary to produce the remittance you mention within a fortnight from this time; and I request you will be punctual. I shall contrive, in some way or other, to get rid of Dally. I feel perfectly equal to managing this little business myself.

“ I remain, dear Nixon,

“ YOUR FAITHFUL AGENT.”

Having himself deposited this letter at the post-office, Mr. Wilson returned home, restored to his usual dignified composure, and perfectly satisfied with the method he had devised for repairing the mischief likely to ensue upon the thoughtless conduct of his old associate. He knew not where Dally was to be found; but felt little doubt of his speedily

repeating his visit. In this he was not mistaken, for the breakfast was hardly removed on the following morning, when he was told that "the same man what called yesterday was com'd again." Mr. Wilson hastened to receive him, and this time was himself the first to extend the hand in token of good fellowship.

"You got a drop too much, my friend, yesterday; but it was more my fault than your's; however, we must be steady now, for we have important business to settle."

"Never you fear me; no liquor I'll take shall put me off my duty. Tell me where Darcy is, and it sha'n't be long before the work is done."

"Here is a list of the places through which I know he has already passed," said Wilson, producing a paper; "follow by the same route exactly, and you'll be sure to come up with him."

Dally took the paper, and on reading it, found that the last place mentioned was "Harpur's Ferry," in Virginia.

"Do you go along, master?" he inquired.

"No, Dally, my intention is to follow you at the distance of a few days, that we may avoid suspicion. But do nothing, my good fellow, before I come : the job is given between us, and we must go share and share alike."

"You're not to share in my t'other hundred pounds though, remember that."

"Certainly not, the gentleman has promised me another hundred for helping you."

"Then he's an ass,—the more cooks the worse broth ; if all you've got to do is to help me with that bit of work as we have been talking about, you may as well stay at home, and if you're a gentleman, you won't take all that hundred for nothing ; but give me fifty of it, and trouble yourself no more about the matter."

Wilson looked as if he were hesitating ; at length he answered—

"There is some truth in what you say, Dally ; if I could be quite sure that you would see after it well and thoroughly yourself, I would not mind giving you half my share, for I have business to mind at home, that's a fact."

"Done, then," said Dally eagerly, "done: I'll come back here when all's finished to get the money, and 'tis you must tell the squire over the water that all's right."

"That I'll do, Dally, depend on it, as soon as you return to tell me the news. And now, my good fellow, hasten away; any delay may ruin the scheme altogether. Here are ten dollars, as an earnest that I shall deal fairly with you. Good bye!" And Wilson opened the door for him.

"I wish you'd just make it twenty, master. I have got a wife and child in the town, as I'd like to leave here, if I had not spent all my money; 'tis bad travelling with 'em. Besides, I'd rather—I'd rather not have them with me, I should feel so queer like, after I'd done it, to look in their faces; I know just how Susan would look, if I happened to be a bit down-hearted, when 'tis over."

"I believe you are right, Dally; but at any rate you had better not leave her here, she'll be a deal better off at Utica."

“ Will she ? well, I’ll see about it—but you’ll give me the other ten, won’t you.”

“ Here they are, my lad ; but keep touch with me ; you’ve a long journey before you, and must be steady. Take the paper with you, and that will teach you the road. If they are not at Harpur’s Ferry, you must follow on—you’ll easily hear of them. Good luck to you, farewell ;” and so saying, he closed the door upon him.

His next step was to call on his good sister, Mrs. Williams ; he found her alone, and, as usual, delighted to see him. He told her that he was come to her, on what he considered very important business.

“ We have many of us been guilty of a great sin, dear sister,” he continued, “ a fearful sin. We have all of us listened to slander, and many of us, I fear, have repeated it.”

“ God forbid, brother ; I trust that nothing such can be laid to my charge.”

“ If you have sinned in this way, Sarah, it

has been from the wickedness of others, rather than from your own, and well I know you will do your best to repair the evil."

"That will I, surely, if you will tell me what I can do. What is it you mean, brother Robert?"

Wilson then proceeded to explain to Mrs. Williams that the evil of which he complained, was the attack made on the character of their late neighbour, Mr. Gordon.

He informed her that he had instituted an inquiry respecting them, which had been most satisfactorily answered; that it was certain Mr. Gordon was a man of high character and distinguished standing in his own country; and he was shocked to say that the abuse he had met with in Rochester, was an unchristian-like ebullition of ignorance and envy.

"Possible!" exclaimed Mrs. Williams.

"We must atone for it, sister, as best we may. I shall set off myself to-morrow morning to avow the error I have done, like a Christian

man ; and I am come to tell you that you will do no more than your duty if you send Emily Williams' with me."

"Gracious mè ! where to, brother ?"

"Why, just wherever these wronged and righteous people may be."

"Why, brother, I am downright consternated to hear you—wasn't it your own self that forbid me to let her take her leave of them ? You should retrospect, brother Wilson, before you make such a requirement of me. Sure you have forgot that Emily is the daughter of a Secretary of State ! Her going after these suspected people would never be obliterated."

It was very unusual for Mr. Wilson to meet remonstrance, or contradiction, from any of his congregation ; still less was he accustomed to it from his admiring sister. But Mr. Wilson was never angry ; sorry he might be, and something like horror and dismay was to be seen on his countenance, when the folly or wickedness of his auditors led them to differ from him. On the present occasion, he sighed profoundly, and

rose to take leave, with an air of so much estrangement, that the worthy widow grew alarmed.

“Why, brother, how hasty you seem: I can’t realize that you want me to send Emily after those English people.”

“Some strange change must have come upon you, Sarah; the time was that you would have trusted your daughter to go with me, and never asked where. I wish to do the duty of a Christian, and I came here to put you in the way to do it likewise; but I shall say no more. I wish you heartily well, Sarah, but we must meet no more in this world. You will not trust my niece to my keeping, and it is therefore quite time for us to part.”

“The Lord be good to me! never meet again? Sure I would rather do any thing than have a disconnection between our families,” and the tender hearted lady began to weep.

Mr. Wilson took her hand kindly, and they both sat down again. A very little more conversation was sufficient to convince Mrs. Wil-

liams that she had been most wrong to question the propriety of brother Wilson's conduct, for a single instant. Having brought her to this reasonable state of mind, he proceeded to prove that he was as kind as judicious.

"My dear Sarah, I should be very sorry to do any thing to vex you, and yet, as a Christian minister, I must act according to my sense of duty. Emily must go with me, but it shall be on Thursday, and not to-morrow, if that will be more satisfactory to you."

Mrs. Williams expressed much gratitude for this kindness, and accepted the delay, as it would be more convenient for getting "her things" ready. And so they parted; Mr. Wilson, with a renewed touch of that gentle complacency, with which the conviction that he managed every body, always cheered him; and Mrs. Williams to the apartment of her daughter, to announce to her the astonishing, but delightful intelligence, that she was to set off in pursuit of the friends whose absence had already dimmed her eye, and chilled the soft bloom upon her cheek.

The careful mother had been so vehement in her expressions of detestation at the atrocities of the Gordon party, that she felt somewhat at a loss in what manner to convey the information, without compromising her dignity. Before she had reached the top of the stairs, however, she had judiciously determined to merge all her own feelings and opinions, in those of her respected brother.

"Emily," she began, "there is strange news come to town."

Emily raised her eyes from the paper on which she was writing—"Is there, mamma?"

"Yes, indeed; and what you, for one, will glory to hear, I guess; but 'tis all the goodness of your dear uncle that has produced the annulment of what has been said against them."

Though this speech was quite unintelligible, there was something in it to rouse attention.

"What do you mean, mamma?" said Emily.

"Why, just that your blessed uncle is going a pilgrimage, like the martyrs and saints of old, to atone, as he says, for his sins."

Emily composedly continued her writing.

"Why, Emily, one might as well speak to a shad. Your father, when he was Secretary of State, could not have looked more stiff, and business-like, than you pretend to do now. Will you listen to me?"

"Certainly, mamma."

"Well, then, I expect you will conclude that your uncle has made a betterment of his former opinions, when I tell you that he says the Gordons are all mighty good people, and that he will take you with him, to make them an apology."

The ruddy blush that dyed the cheek of Emily, and the radiant light which sparkled in her eyes, made her look so exceedingly lovely, that her stiff and half offended mother could not withhold a smile of complacency as she looked at her.

"True as you are alive, Emily; but you hadn't ought to sit there, child, for to eventuate my story: I must tell you, that you are to be off the day after to-morrow."

Astonishment, delight, and incredulity, were all expressed by the accent in which Emily exclaimed "Impossible!"

"What can you mean, Emily Williams, by that?" said her mother, pettishly. "I tell you a thing is so, and you answer me smack that it is impossible."

"Forgive me! forgive me! dearest mamma," exclaimed Emily, springing from her chair, and throwing her arms round her mother's neck; "I am too happy to know what I say;—and you will go too, mamma?"

"Why, as for that, I don't remember that my brother said any thing about it, and I expect I should find it over cold for me this frosty weather—you must wrap up thoroughly, or you'll never bear it. I'll see to have the buffalo skins that belong to the sleigh looked up for you, and you had best see about your things yourself."

Emily stopped her mother as she was leaving the room—

"Do not go," she said, "till you have ex-

plained to me what all this means—where am I to go with my uncle?"

"That's considerable more than I can tell you, Emily; it is enough for you to know that it is his pleasure you should go with him. All he does is for good!"

This was uttered in much the same earnest tone as if she had spoken of the decrees of Providence. It was a tone which Emily could hardly endure, even from her mother; she turned away, and suffered her to leave the room without farther interruption.

Once more alone, the poor girl endeavoured to think composedly of what she had heard; but it was impossible: one moment the wildest delight seemed to take possession of her senses, but the next, inexplicable doubts overshadowed her joy; and her deep conviction of the unprincipled hypocrisy of her uncle made her fear that some mischief lay hid in this seemingly delightful change.

Had the object proposed been any thing less

dear to her than a re-union with Caroline, and the rest of her party, she would decidedly have refused to accompany him; as it was, she determined to see him, and if possible to discover his real intentions and motives.

Having taken this resolution, she immediately acted upon it, and a few moments brought her to Wilson's door. As she raised her hand to knock, it was opened by himself. He received her very kindly; and upon her saying she wished to speak to him, he led her to the library, telling her, that he would willingly postpone his own business till she had communicated her's. There was naturally great firmness in Emily's character, which, as we have said, the few last weeks had wonderfully developed; and it was almost without faltering that she began the conversation, by asking if she had understood her mother rightly, when she bade her prepare herself to set off with him on Thursday in pursuit of Mr. Gordon's family? She looked stedfastly at him as he replied; and

she saw no reason to doubt the truth of the assurance he uttered, that such was certainly his intention.

“ May I ask you, sir, what is your reason for wishing me to accompany you ? ”

“ Solely, Emily, that I may do both you and them a pleasure, by enabling you to renew a friendship which I was the means of interrupting. I am assured, from authority I cannot doubt, that Mr. Gordon is a gentleman of honour and fortune, and that his daughter is a young lady every way desirable for you as a friend.”

“ And Mr. Smith, sir,” said Emily, her eye still fixed upon his, and a very slight tremor in her voice ; “ have you heard any thing of him ? ”

“ Nothing but what is to his honour, Emily. He is travelling with Mr. Gordon for improvement.”

As Mr. Wilson was employed in stirring the fire as he answered her, she could not see the expression of his face, but his voice had its usual sweet and gentle tone.

“ You must wrap well, Emily,” he continued ;
“ I fear you will find it very cold travelling.”

“ Where do you suppose Mr. Gordon’s party to be, sir ?” said Emily, not noticing her uncle’s kind attention.

“ I think we shall find them at Niagara.”

“ I hardly think I shall like to go, without receiving an invitation to join them there,” said the cautious girl.

“ You are quite right, my dear, if you feel the least doubt of their being glad to see you. I proposed your accompanying me, because I thought you had suffered from the painful circumstances attending your separation ; but you are a much better judge than I can be as to the propriety of your paying them this sudden visit. I thought you had been very intimate ; and if so, nothing could be more natural than your taking advantage of my protection, to renew a friendship so rudely broken.”

“ I was very intimate with them, and should be delighted could we meet again under happier auspices than those which attended our parting ;

but may I ask you, sir, what your reason is for joining them?"

It was now the uncle's turn to look earnestly; he fixed his eyes on her face as he answered,

"What should it be, child, but the wish to be kind, as well as just to an amiable stranger?"

There was something he did not like in the manner of her returning his gaze, and he again got up and occupied himself with the fire.

"The fact is, my dear," he continued, "and I am sorry to confess it, that Mr. Gordon called upon me at the time that slander was pressing heavily upon him; and I, who in my conscience believed the rumour against him, did not console him under it as I ought to have done. Now I find he is innocent, you can hardly wonder that I should hasten to him, and with the humility of a real Christian, ask his forgiveness for my injustice."

"I am truly glad, sir," replied Emily, "that my valued friends are no longer misunderstood. If you will take a letter to them from me, I should be greatly obliged to you."

“ And you will not go, then ?” said her uncle suddenly, and probably with more sternness than he intended.

“ No, sir,” she quietly replied, and rose to leave him.

Mr. Wilson went to the door, as if to open it for her, but paused with the handle in his hand.

“ What can be said of a young person, Emily, who was eager to oppose the will of her family, when they desired to break a connexion of doubtful propriety, and equally so when they wished to renew it, upon the conviction that it might safely be indulged ?”

“ Such is not my case, sir,” said Emily, firmly ; “ I wish nothing more earnestly than to be re-united to them ; but it would be disagreeable to present myself so unexpectedly.”

“ You are strangely scrupulous, for so young a lady,” said he sneeringly. “ What say you, then, to announcing your intended visit by the post ?”

“ Do you know their address, sir ?

"I think it almost certain that they are at Niagara."

Emily well knew that it had been their intention to go thither, and the idea of joining them there, suggested a thousand delightful feelings. To see Caroline; to see Niagara; to see them all once more! Was it possible that this was really in her power, and she hesitated to accept it? A vague apprehension of danger to Lord Darcy, from some machination of her wily uncle, weighed upon her spirits; it was plain he knew where to find him, and her being near could not increase, nay, it might lessen his danger. She looked timidly at her uncle, and appeared to hesitate.

"Consult your mamma, my dear child; if she sees any objections to your going, we will give it up; but if not, I confess I should be much pleased to carry such a peace-maker with me, as I am sure you would be."

"Well, sir, I believe you have conquered my scruples; and if mamma says she approves of it, I will be ready to attend you."

Emily returned home well aware that she had not succeeded in the object of her visit, which was to ascertain, in some degree, the motives of her uncle's conduct; but the assurance, which she no longer doubted, that she should again see those whose loss she had so bitterly mourned, almost bewildered her with delight. She felt, as she made the preparations for departure, as if she were acting in the wild and incoherent scenes of a dream; but nothing occurred to awaken her, and on the day appointed she set off on her most unexpected journey.

CHAPTER XXV.

Your suspicion is not without wit and judgment.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was impossible to have a more agreeable stage-coach companion than Mr. Wilson made himself to Emily. He guarded her from cold with the most sedulous attention; he conversed with animation and intelligence on every subject suggested by the scenery they passed; and at last, almost made her forget that he was, next his son, the being whom she most feared and detested. It is certainly probable that the delightful anticipation of meeting those she loved, gave a tone to her spirits, which made them easily harmonize with all around her. The bright keen air was felt only to be en-

joyed ; the dismal ridge-way road seemed a terrace leading to paradise ; and even the buffetings of the still more dismal corderoy that followed, were borne without repining.

The wonders of Lockport, and all the magnificent masonry of its double locks, were beheld, perhaps, without a proper degree of admiration by the young citizeness ; and when her companion proposed to pass a day there for the more complete gratification of the curiosity which such an admirable assemblage of machinery must necessarily excite, she earnestly declined the offer as, she observed, it would be a pity to run the risk of missing their friends, who it was not likely would remain long at Niagara at such an unfavourable season of the year. Her amiable cavalier yielded to her reasoning without the slightest difficulty or remonstrance ; and, in short, instead of the authoritative Presbyterian minister uncle of Rochester, Mr. Wilson seemed transformed, by the mere act of travelling, into the most gracious, amiable, and submissive companion in

the world. At an early hour on the following morning they started for Lemiston.

How the heart of Emily beat, when she was told on crossing the ferry, that two hours more would bring her to Niagara! Had she been told the same thing a few months before, it is probable that her pulses then would not have beat very tranquilly, but the emotion would have arisen from a very different cause. As the rumbling stage rolled on, she trembled from excessive agitation; but not (it is but honest to confess it) because she drew near to the most awful and magnificent object in the vast creation of the universe. She ceased to hear the words which her attentive and ever gentle uncle addressed to her; her cheeks kindled, her breath came quick, when on a sudden the driver stopped his horses, and raising the leathern curtains with one hand, while he pointed forward his whip with the other, he said, "There they are."

This short phrase, and the action which accompanied it, roused Emily from her reverie.

She looked in the direction indicated, and saw through the leafless trees, and rising high above their lofty heads, the eternal canopy of spray that hangs over the cataract. The next moment she caught a distant, but distinct view of the mighty flood itself. The vast expanse of snow-white foam rose glittering brightly before the winter sun, and Emily, as she looked upon its glory, exclaimed, with the feeling of a penitent, "Now God forgive me!"

The coachman, however, did not allow her long to gaze on the astounding spectacle; in the next moment they were again buried in the forest. But this interval had been of essential service to the agitated young traveller. All her little personal feelings, however deep, however violent, were for the moment forgotten, and a sentiment of the most pure devotion took their place. How far was the celebrated preacher who sat beside her from being capable of conceiving the sublime and animated piety which at that moment filled the soul of his young companion!

Nothing could have been more fortunate for Emily than this little circumstance; without it she would have wanted firmness to present herself to her friends, in such a manner as not to betray her own secret: but now she felt quite equal to it. The noble Darcy, the dignified Mr. Gordon, the accomplished Caroline, were not at this moment of so very different a race from herself. Were they not all the children of HIM whose will had made a rush of waters to speak alike to the souls of all his creatures, and bid them praise His name?

As they approached the end of their journey, Mr. Wilson himself was not quite free from a little nervous embarrassment. The step he was taking was *un peu fort*,—if he were not well received, he should feel embarrassed and humbled. These were sensations he could not endure. He coloured as the possibility occurred to him; then turned paler than before, as the consequences of such ingratitude on their part, suggested themselves.

On arriving at the steps of Forsythe's hotel,

Mr. Wilson inquired if a gentleman of the name of Gordon were there, with a party.

"Yes, sir," was the satisfactory reply.

"Show us to a private room," said Mr. Wilson; and on reaching it, Emily for the first time was made fully to understand the reason for which her attendance had been so earnestly insisted on by her provident uncle. He addressed her thus:—

"We are fortunate, my dear Emily, in finding these amiable people. But it is you who must prepare to see them first, my dear child. I have behaved harshly to them, I confess it with sorrow and repentance; but I think you can make them aware that I am now willing to offer any reparation in my power. Make them understand this, my dear Emily, and that nothing but my wish to atone for my share of the injustice done them, could have induced me to take this journey; tell them, too, that I have brought you with me to act as a peace-maker between us."

"What can he be at now?" thought Emily.

But this doubt of his motives could not at this moment interfere with the happiness which beat strongly at her heart, as she thought of her vicinity to those so dear to her.

“ Shall I ring the bell, my dear, and ask the waiter to show you the way to your friends?”

“ If you please, sir ; I am quite ready to go.” And she threw aside her furs, and prepared to execute her agitating, but most delightful mission.

“ Can you show this lady to Miss Gordon?” said Mr. Wilson to the waiter, who answered the bell.

“ Certainly, sir, if the young lady will please to walk this way. What name shall I say, ma’am?”

“ It does not signify,” said Emily ; “ where is she ?”

“ Just this way, ma’am.”

And in a moment he flung open a door, and Emily found herself standing in the midst of her friends.

Caroline was sitting close to the fire, writing ;

Madame de Clairville occupied the opposite side, and was at work. Mr. Gordon had a newspaper, and Lord Darcy held a book in his hand. They all looked up, as the door opened, and many exclamations were uttered; but one only struck the ear of Emily. It was her own name, pronounced by a voice which had never breathed it before, and no one but herself heard it now; but it sunk clear and distinct to her heart. The arms of Caroline were thrown round her, Madame de Clairville took one hand, Mr. Gordon gallantly kissed the other, but Lord Darcy stood apart, looking at the scene before him. When she was released, however, from the embrace of her delighted friend, he approached, and offered his hand, saying,

“ I hope that I, too, may be remembered as an old acquaintance by Miss Williams.”

These words were stiff and cold amid the warm and affectionate greetings of the rest; but she still felt the “Emily!” at her heart, and raised her eyes to him, as she gave her hand,

with a look of such pleasure that the young man's cheeks and brow were crimsoned. But no one remarked it, and he ventured to make one of the anxious group that crowded closely round her, awaiting the answer to Caroline's eager inquiry.

"How came you here, my Emily?"

The smiling reply, "My uncle brought me, Miss Gordon," caused a general exclamation of surprise; and this was not much lessened by the explanation of his motives, and the delivery of his message, which followed.

"I always did think Mr. Wilson the most mysterious mortal I ever encountered," said Caroline; "so completely a man of the world, ay, and of the English world too, at one moment, and so completely something else the next. But I really think his behaviour, as respects us, more perfectly incomprehensible than all the rest. What can possibly be his motive for bringing you to us?"

Without a word of commentary, and with a smile of hardly dubious meaning, Emily re-

peated again her uncle's message in the same words as before.

Madame de Clairville shrugged her shoulders most expressively, but said with an air of cordial pleasure,

"C'est égal, ma chère, vous êtes ici."

"We must give him absolution for all the rest," said Lord Darcy, colouring as he spoke.

"My dear Emily," said Mr. Gordon, "you must lead me to your uncle directly; I know not how far he may have aided and abetted the foolish stories that annoyed us at Rochester, but I am fully prepared to allow that in bringing you to us, he has fully atoned for all the mischief he can possibly have done."

"Stop a moment, papa, if you please," said Caroline, "let us look at her a little, and be very sure that it is our own Emily, before you venture into the presence of that reverend personage, to offer him your thanksgivings; I really can hardly yet believe my eyes. Yes," she continued, looking affectionately in her face, and kissing her fair forehead, "yes, it is cer-

tainly Emily, and nothing else. But he is going to leave you with us, I hope? If he does not, I had almost rather not have seen you at all."

Emily professed her entire ignorance of his future intentions, but begged to second Mr. Gordon's proposal of seeking him. She offered to go to his apartment, and bring him back with her, but Mr. Gordon courteously assured her that he was too grateful for the favour he had now done them, not to wait upon him immediately to express his gratitude.

Mr. Wilson received his visiter with great politeness, and apologised with a great deal of specious suavity for having permitted his judgment to be biassed for a moment, by the injurious reports which had been so industriously put in circulation concerning him.

"I think, Mr. Gordon," he continued, "that I have discovered the origin of them, and it was the hope of being useful to you, together with my wish of restoring Emily Williams to the friendship of your amiable daughter, which in-

duced me to pay you this unexpected visit. May I send Emily to her young friend, while I beg the favour of your private ear for half an hour?"

"Certainly, Mr. Wilson, I am quite ready to listen to you, though I confess the stories you mention are a matter of great indifference to me."

Emily had already taken advantage of the hint given her, and the two gentlemen were left alone.

Mr. Wilson rose, and looked at the windows which opened upon a balcony to ascertain that there were no listeners, then resuming his seat, he began—

"A most strange and atrocious plot has come to my knowledge, Mr. Gordon. But before I disclose it, I must ask your promise not to mention to any one beyond your own family that you have obtained the information from me."

It was with an air somewhat constrained and stiff, that Mr. Gordon gave the required pro-

mise. He was not fond of secret communications.

"Are you aware, Mr. Gordon, that your friend, Lord Darcy, has a very powerful enemy?"

Mr. Gordon started, and coloured highly, but did not answer.

"Are you aware of this, sir?" repeated Wilson.

"I am not aware, sir, that any friend of mine is so unfortunate."

"I grieve to have such painful information to give you, but unfortunately I am but too certain that such is the fact. The interesting young nobleman who is under your protection, stands in peril of his life from a concealed enemy."

Mr. Gordon was eminently gifted with that ready propriety of manner which is usually denominated *tact*, but which in plain English, may be described as the union of good judgment with presence of mind. On this occasion, however, he felt perfectly at a loss what answer

to return. His embarrassment did not escape the keen eye of Wilson, but his game was to conciliate and win confidence, not to alarm; not appearing, therefore, to be in the least aware of this embarrassment, he continued with a voice and manner of the most frank and open friendliness—

“I trust you cannot for a moment be alarmed, my dear sir, because these facts have come to *my* knowledge; when you know me better, you will find that you have no reason to regret it.—But it is necessary that I should be frank with you, even at the risk of giving pain. The whole history of Dally is known to me; and now, Mr. Gordon, all I can say is—treat me as a friend, and you shall find me one.”

The astonishment of Mr. Gordon kept him silent for some moments. He rose, and said in a tone that certainly conveyed some symptoms of reproach, (for his immediate idea was that the servant who had left him had been tampered with)—“And by what means, sir, have you obtained your information?”

"By none, sir, that are unworthy my character, or my profession."

This answer was uttered so meekly, and with a look of such gentle reproach, that Mr. Gordon was conquered. He held out his hand, which was cordially pressed by Wilson, as he said—

"Your conduct, Mr. Gordon, has been such through the whole affair, as must ensure the admiration and esteem of every one. Suffer me to call myself your friend, and permit me the happiness of being useful to you."

"Forgive me, sir," said Mr. Gordon, "if the vexation I must naturally feel at finding that known, which I wished to keep secret, has given me the appearance of being displeased with you. Be assured, I am not so unreasonable. But you would do me a great favour, Mr. Wilson, if you would consent to inform me from what quarter the information reached you."

"Do not ask me the only thing I must refuse. I am bound in honour not to disclose

this. I flatter myself I have the clue in my hand which will enable me to unravel a most dark mystery; but that clue no one can follow but myself."

"May I not know who the person is, who threatens the life of my unfortunate charge?"

"To tell you that, were to tell you every thing. I am sworn to secrecy, and nothing but the conviction that the life of young Darcy can be endangered by keeping my promise, shall induce me to break it."

"Then wherefore, sir, make this communication to me at all?"

"To prove to you that you have a friend in this country, in whom you may confide. I believe it to be in my power to save Lord Darcy, if the whole management of the business be intrusted to me."

Wilson understood wonderfully well almost every doubling of the human heart; he could sit quietly with one hand in his breast, and the other supinely resting on the arm of his chair, the very model of comfortable indifference, while

his calm deep-set eye looked into the very souls of those around him. There was but one subject on which his acute sagacity could not help him—he understood not the feelings of a man of honour.

Mr. Gordon's devoted attachment to Lord Darcy, his profuse generosity, his graceful courtesy, his elegant taste, his utter indifference to expense,—all this he had read as easily as a page of wire-wove, hot-pressed, pica—but for the instinctive feeling which taught him to shrink from one, who avowed a confidential intercourse with a villain—he knew not that any such existed.

To this offer of friendship and assistance Mr. Gordon bowed gravely, and said—

“ I thank you, sir, for your proffered kindness, but I trust we shall have no occasion to trouble you. I should be very sorry to disturb the tranquillity of any friends we may be so fortunate as to meet during our temporary visit to this country. As you are acquainted with the circumstances which induced us to leave our

own, I need hardly tell you that I am sorry to hear the adventure of Dally is known. Yet its being so, may eventually prove beneficial to Lord Darcy, as it will undoubtedly hasten his return to England. No farther inconvenience can await him there, while awaiting his trial for the assault, than a possible residence of some weeks in the tower of London."

"I understood," said Wilson, with a look of deep concern, "that the charge against him was for murder."

There was something in the eye, or the voice of Wilson, as he uttered these words, which awakened a strong, though vague feeling of suspicion in the mind of Mr. Gordon.

"And did not your informer mention also, sir, that Dally was alive?" said he.

It generally happens in a conversation between an honest man and a rogue, where something is to be learnt, and something concealed, that the advantage lies on the side of the rogue; but in the present case it was altogether on the side of the honest man. This unexpected

question quite overpowered Wilson; he turned pale, stammered, and finally said—

“ Really, sir, I cannot even guess what you mean.”

The agitation of Wilson while uttering these words, revived a hope in the bosom of Mr. Gordon, which recent intelligence had almost wholly extinguished. This hope, which Lady Darcy's letter, written after her unfortunate visit to Carbury had raised, had been cruelly damped by one from her father, received since their arrival at Niagara, in which her insanity was so positively asserted, and the opinion of a well-known London physician on the subject declared to be so decided, that Lord Darcy had again fallen into all the suffering of a sensitive spirit, under the consciousness of heavy crime. The voice, the accent, the look of Wilson, as he made this short and unmeaning reply to the question which Mr. Gordon had in fact asked merely as an experiment, at once renewed this delightful hope. He instantly conceived that the plot was on the purse of Lord Darcy, and

that Wilson was somehow or other, unaccountably, an agent and party in it; but remembering the sweet girl he had brought with him, to decoy them, as he supposed, into the intimacy necessary for his purpose, he refrained from every expression of anger, or even of contempt, and replied composedly,

“ I assure you, Mr. Wilson, that such is the fact; the intelligence has reached us but lately, and we intend to remain in America only long enough to see the many interesting objects it contains, and to give time to Lord Darcy’s lawyer to arrange matters before our return, so as to give our young friend the least possible inconvenience before its final arrangement.”

During this speech, Wilson recovered himself sufficiently to say, that if such were the case, he had been misinformed, and that the services he had hoped to render them, would certainly not be wanted; he should, therefore, he added, only pay his compliments to Miss Gordon’s party, and return to Rochester on the morrow. Mr. Gordon rose to take his leave. He wished

to say something conciliatory for the sake of Emily, but hardly knew how to word it, lest his civility might be construed into a wish of detaining him at Niagara ; he, therefore, merely replied, that Miss Gordon would be happy to see him, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Signs of love.—SHAKSPEARE.

ON returning to his own apartments, he found Emily seated between Caroline and Madame de Clairville, still occupied in answering their numerous questions concerning all she had heard respecting them since their departure; while Lord Darcy sat near, listening with a degree of interest which it was now rare to see excited in him by any thing. He had become, perhaps, more completely wretched since the arrival of his grand-father's letter, than he had ever been. The delightful hope which was awakened by his mother's account of the conversation in the cavern, had been dwelt upon with all the san-

guine eagerness of youth, and notwithstanding the statement her letter contained of the doubts thrown upon her testimony, in consequence of the delirium she had suffered from, during her illness, he still clung with confidence to her assurance that the scene she had described had actually taken place. It was just at this time, when his spirits, relieved from the weight which had so long pressed upon him, were exactly in the fittest state to receive pleasurable impressions, that his daily, though almost unnoted, intercourse with Emily began.

Lovely as she was, Lord Darcy was of a temper, which might have enabled him to continue for months together without remarking her, had she only appeared to him surrounded by her kinsfolk and acquaintance. But in Caroline's little drawing-room, she seemed like a delicate flower that they had found in the forest, transplanted and cherished, till it had become fairer than any the garden could offer. Yet he had looked at her, and listened to her

without a thought beyond the present pleasure of doing so; and it was not till the moment arrived which occasioned their sudden separation, that he became at all conscious of the importance of her society to his happiness. Still less did he dream that this exquisite creature loved him with all the fervour of her innocent and affectionate heart. They had parted without one word, without one look of explanation; but the drooping spirit of Emily had not in her sad and lonely chamber mourned more deeply the loss of all she loved, than the young Earl of Darcy had done, while his proud heart bled among the awful solitudes of Niagara.

As if fate had destined this period of his existence to be one of unmingled suffering, Mr. Oglander's letter reached him, two days after his arrival at Niagara, which again plunged him into all the horrors of believing himself a murderer. Mr. Oglander wrote in the tenderest and most affectionate manner; but his

statement as to the insanity of Lady Darcy, and the utter fallacy of her notions respecting Dally, left him no ground to hope.

Yet even this misery was, for a while, forgotten in the delight of again seeing Emily; and Mr. Gordon, on re-entering the room, was struck for the first time with a suspicion of the truth. Emily's delicate cheek was of a bright carnation, and her eyes sparkled with that indescribable lustre which neither youth nor beauty are capable of producing, unless kindled by some strong emotion from within. Those of Lord Darcy were fixed immovably upon her, and as Mr. Gordon's followed them, he thought it was impossible that the young man could look and not love. This was not exactly as he would have wished. He feared that the little republican, notwithstanding her beauty, her sweetness, and her talents, was hardly such a bride as Lady Darcy would have chosen for her son. As these thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, he joined the group with mingled feelings of admiration and regret.

Emily ventured to hint her curiosity to know if Mr. Gordon had discovered her uncle's real motive for the step he had taken. There was such an innocent air of confidential freedom in her manner of asking the question, that Mr. Gordon, who well remembered her conduct at Rochester, felt no scruple as to replying with entire sincerity,—and yet he felt there was something like indelicacy, considering their near relationship, in telling her exactly what he thought of her uncle.

“You must promise to forgive me, my dear Emily, if I do not express myself concerning your uncle, with all the respect I would wish to feel.”

“Do not,” she replied, “think me wicked and unnatural, but—”

“Nay, Emily,” exclaimed Caroline, “if I could ever have believed for a moment that you could affect to respect, esteem, value, or love, in the very slightest degree, that odious, sly, canting, hypocritical person, who, *par malheur*, is the husband of your aunt, we should never have been friends.”

"If I had endeavoured to persuade you that duty had so far conquered nature in me," replied Emily, "you know it would not have availed me—for have you not told me twenty times, that you could divine my thoughts before I spoke them?"

"And so I can, and I see at this moment that you expect to hear some precious piece of specious rascality, or else some mystical and incomprehensible instance of finesse. So I recommend, that you and papa should compare notes without the slightest scruple on either side; for I can inform you both, in case you do not know it already, that there are not three grains of difference in the value of your respective esteem for the Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Rochester. Do, papa, try if you and Emily between you can make out any reasonable theory for this most extraordinary, but delightful expedition."

"Agreed," said Mr. Gordon, "how many facts can you bring to bear upon the subject, Emily?"

"Not many, I assure you—I would rather you began your statement first."

"Well then, prepare—I have not the slightest doubt that he knows our secret."

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Emily, turning very pale, "is it possible?"

"Were you in no degree aware of this, my dear?"

"Oh no! he never gave me the slightest reason to suspect it."

She then related exactly what had passed between her and her uncle, when she called at his house, and also the total change he had effected in the opinions of her mother.

Mr. Gordon then, with equal fidelity, repeated the conversation which had just taken place. When he described the effect which his assertion of Dally's existence produced on Mr. Wilson, and the inference he drew from it, Lord Darcy was strongly affected.

"Alas!" he exclaimed, "my poor mother! was she then in her senses, when she made this statement? and is she treated as a lunatic?"

“Be tranquil, dearest Edward, and all will yet be well. But we must have patience. The legal friend I have written to consult, will tell us what the worst risk may be, which, underall the circumstances, you may run by returning. And if it be any thing short of life, we will return. If the fellow lives, and I do now again most strongly believe it, he cannot long delude us. The law has many modes of discovering such impostures, and, in your case, there is no doubt but they will be all resorted to. Meanwhile let us all be cautious, and we may perhaps learn more from this extraordinary uncle of your’s, Emily, than it may be his intention to teach us.”

“It cannot be doubted,” said Madame de Clairville, “that his purpose is to obtain money, but trust him not in any way.”

“I do not mean to do so, my good friend, I promise you; I do not feel at all afraid of him—unless indeed, he should take it into his head to run away with our dear little friend here.”

"I shall take care of that, papa," replied Caroline. "At Rochester, when I was told that her mother forbade our meeting, I had nothing for it, but to bid her farewell with as much philosophy as I could muster; but now the case is altered. The reverend uncle has himself placed her under our protection, the mamma has sanctioned the visit, and all we have to do, is to take her and be thankful."

Emily asked if it would not be necessary for her to return to the room, where she had left her uncle, that she might learn what stay he intended to make.

"No, no, no," said Madame de Clairville quickly, "you have nothing at all to do with that; stay you quietly, he will not offer to take you away."

"He dare not," said Caroline: "you share my room, Emily," she continued: "come with me, and I will instal you in it."

"Stay for a moment, Caroline," said her father; "we must not be too cavalier in our proceedings. Will you permit me, ladies, to

send this unlucky Machiavel an invitation to dine with us?"

Caroline raised her handsome eye-brows, with a look of discomfort, but at the same time crossed her arms upon her breast, and bowed her head in token of submission.

Madame kissed the tips of her pretty fingers to him, "*Vous êtes bon diplomate, Monsieur.*"

Lord Darcy looked inquiringly at Emily. She smiled, and said, "How very kind you are!" So the waiter was summoned, and the invitation to dine at five o'clock in Mr. Gordon's parlour, dispatched. And in what state did it find him? This will be best answered, by giving a brief sketch of the motives and objects of his late proceedings.

The extreme vexation and embarrassment into which the visit of Dally had plunged him, have been already described. Such an associate not only destroyed, utterly and for ever, his well arranged scheme of a profitable and lasting friendship with Lord Darcy, and all the delightful possibilities with which it was to decorate

his future life, but risked most fearfully that odour of sanctity in which he lived, and had his being. Deep and dark were the curses he breathed against his old comrade, for the evil he had so wantonly brought upon him; but these were only idle ebullitions, which afforded but a slight and momentary relief. Something must be done to avert the mischiefs which threatened him, and it did not take him long to decide what it should be.

To get rid of Dally was his first object, and the sending him upon a long fruitless chase into the wildest part of Virginia, was quite enough to secure himself at this critical moment from the pressing danger which his presence threatened. The next point was to make sure of as large a portion as possible of the loose cash, which the unfortunate adventure of Lord Darcy had evidently set in motion. On one side lay a thousand pounds; but in picking it up, he must not only soil his hands (which, though not very important to the principles of such a gentleman, was exceedingly repugnant to

his taste,) but he must also put his safety into very considerable danger by the transaction. Nevertheless the bribe was too rich a one to be decisively rejected; it was impossible to foresee exactly how things might turn out, and he therefore wrote the letter to Oglander, which has been given in a preceding chapter. But this was done only as a precautionary measure, and without any intention of abandoning the much more agreeable scheme of a profitable intimacy with the young man whom he therein undertook to destroy. Should he succeed in leading Mr. Gordon and Lord Darcy, by gentle degrees, to place themselves entirely in his friendly hands, he nothing doubted of the liberality with which, in one way or another, his important services would be rewarded. If, on the contrary, he failed in this, the bribe offered by Nixon Oglander would still be within his grasp; and if his offered friendship were rejected, he determined to deserve it.

Fervently did he give thanks to his own foresight, when the reception which his overtures

received from Mr. Gordon convinced him, that there was nothing to be hoped from him, or his noble charge. His assertion, that Dally was alive, sealed the fate of Lord Darcy in his soul: he had no longer a secret to sell. He dies then,—was the conclusion at which he had arrived, at the very moment the waiter opened the door to deliver Mr. Gordon's message.

“Are you ill, sir?” said the man, starting as he remarked the ghastly paleness, which had overspread his features.

“No;—give me a glass of water,” and in a few moments the great practical philosopher was himself again.

The invitation was then delivered, and most graciously accepted.

As soon as the answer was returned, Caroline proposed to take Emily to the Table Rock.

“And my uncle?”

“He shall not be with you, when you first go there, Emily; at least, if you go with me,” said Caroline.

Emily sympathised too truly in this feeling,

to persist in her dutiful remonstrance, and they set off. Mr. Gordon and Madame de Clairville would not brave the cold, and Lord Darcy, once more alive to all the pleasures of existence, cheered by hope, and gay with renewed animation, offered to take charge of the two friends.

Forsythe's hotel stands high; being considerably above the level of the water, above the Falls. The Table Rock is situated within a few feet of this higher level of the river, almost at the very crest of the catâract. The garden of the hotel opens upon a grassy terrace, from which a path descends, through a remnant of the forest, to the sort of under cliff, from every part of which the cascade is seen to great advantage. As long as the path continues through the trees, the only symptom of vicinity to the torrent is the loud, deep, unchanging sound of its rushing waters: in summer, no glimpse is seen through the leafy barrier; but now, as the zig-zag path made a sudden turn, Emily caught, through the stems of the naked trees, her first near view of this stupendous spectacle.

She stopped; but Lord Darcy hurried her on—

“Not yet, not yet; look the other way; you must not look at it, till we come fully in front of the glorious crescent.”

Well pleased to see it as he would have her, she obeyed, and turned her eyes from the object of her eager curiosity.

Their young and bounding steps soon brought them to the marshy level of the under-cliff, along which the only dry path, even in summer, is over planks laid upon the grass, and in some places raised considerably above it, by means of stones or blocks of wood, placed at intervals among the grass and rushes. Along this narrow path Caroline tripped fearlessly, for she was already familiar with it; but there was much to excuse Emily if her steps faltered. Lord Darcy went before her, walking backwards, and carefully leading her by the hand; the voice of the cataract, now very near, was terrific, and Emily, dizzy with past and present emotion, proceeded with real difficulty, and trembled

violently. Lord Darcy stopped. "You are frightened, Miss Williams; let us go back:—do not look at it now."

Emily shook her head in silence, she was afraid to trust her voice, but she went on.

"Emily!" said Lord Darcy, almost in a whisper, "why do you tremble thus? Do you think I would lead you into danger?"

"Oh, no!" was all she could answer, and again she endeavoured to proceed.

Lord Darcy still held her hand, and while for a moment he attempted to detain her, his eyes, for the first time, ventured to fix themselves earnestly on her's, as if he would read there all he wished. Perhaps he did so. Certain it is, that short fleeting moment sealed the destinies of both. Caroline's lively voice, demanding what detained them, was now heard through the thunder of the waterfall, for she had returned to look for them.

Glowing, elated, triumphant, forgetful that earth had a sorrow, or memory a pain, Lord Darcy answered her summons gaily, and at the

same time gently hurried forward his conscious companion.

“ Now, Emily! three steps more, take hold of my arm too.—Good heaven, how you tremble!”

“ Never mind, dear Caroline; indeed I am not frightened.”

And now they reached the flat Table Rock, which, jutting forward from the cliff, enables the spectator who has courage enough to stand upon it, to place himself directly before the crescent fall, and gaze without obstacle on its unspeakable majesty; while below his feet thunders the roaring world of waters, as they seem to rise again towards the heavens in terrible rebound. The rock they stood on, as well as all the neighbouring ground, trembled with the concussion, and the sight, the sound, and the sensation, were awful beyond the power of description.

The hand of Emily, which had rested with the firm grasp of fear on the arm of Lord Darcy, relaxed its hold. He bent forward to look at her—she stood by his side as pale as

marble. Caroline looked in her face almost at the same moment, and dreadfully terrified, exclaimed—

“ Oh, Edward! she is fainting! draw her backwards, backwards, for heaven’s sake—if she falls here, she must perish.”

Lord Darcy took the almost insensible Emily in his arms, and bore her to a spot of greater safety. The earth was hard and dry with frost; Lord Darcy laid her on it, and Caroline, seated on a fallen tree, supported her head on her lap. A few minutes sufficed to restore her senses, but she was quite overpowered, and a shower of tears burst from her eyes.

Lord Darcy knelt beside her in an agony of alarm, while Caroline soothed them both.

It was certainly not the first time she had suspected that Lord Darcy loved her friend Emily, but it was the first in which he had given her an opportunity of confessing that she knew it; and it was with a degree of pleasure, which the satirists of the sex would not have understood, could they have witnessed it, that

she at once felt herself in the unreserved confidence of both. This delightful feeling, however, could be enjoyed but for a moment. Emily still looked exceedingly ill, and, as it appeared to Lord Darcy, perfectly incapable of returning to the hotel on foot. No carriage could come to the place where she lay, and the biting chilliness of a frosty afternoon was increasing every moment.

"What can we do for her, Edward?" said the terrified Caroline: "it is quite impossible for her to climb that steep path again. Shall I stay with her, while you run to the hotel for help?"

"The cold will kill you both, dearest Caroline:—do you hasten forward, and order some one to come down to meet us here with an arm chair; it will be perfectly easy to carry her up between us."

"You are right," said Caroline, "I can be more useful by going, than by staying; compose yourself, my dearest Emily:—try if you can stand."

"Indeed, I can walk back," said Emily: "it

is a very short way," and with the help of Lord Darcy she rose, and attempted to walk.

Caroline fastened her cloak carefully round her, and then started off, saying—

"Move very gently, Emily, and sit down at the foot of the hill. By the time you get there, I shall be returning with some one to assist you."

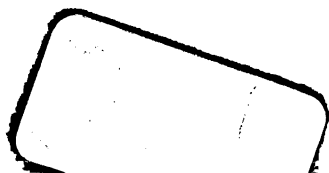
She waited not for an answer, but was out of sight in a moment. Emily assured Lord Darcy that she should want no help. Nor did she—at least, not more than he could give. Slow and faltering was the pace with which she set off on her return, and steep and slippery was the path they had to climb. Yet did this walk rest, as long as life was lent, on the memory of both, as the dearest hour of their lives.

END OF VOL II.

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